

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO

STAMP COLLECTING

By
PRESCOTT HOLDEN THORP



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The High Calling

WHEN A TRIBAL CHIEF decided to send a message to another chief he called upon the strongest and swiftest male in his domain to deliver his words. The tribesman so honored accepted his high calling with all due respect. He was not only being singled out for his personal prowess but also he was given a position of great trust. Only he and the person to whom he would deliver the message would know the intentions of the chief. He would be in great danger of being captured and tortured to reveal his message. He would risk being attacked by wild animals. And to avoid these dangers he could carry only the lightest weapons for, above all, he must run swiftly. The shortest route regardless of danger or hardship was the course he must follow. His, in truth, was "a message to Garcia" and upon his ability to carry out his assignment his very life was at stake. He might be killed by the very person to whom he delivered his message, or he might be killed upon his return by his own commander

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as a "security" measure.

To be courageous, trustworthy and swift were the attributes required of a runner.

And there lie the roots that have nurtured to full flower our modern postal systems. There is the origin of the demand "the mails must go through," a command no longer given only by royal edict. Instead, it can now be given anonymously by the lowliest citizen. Still it remains a command that calls forth the greatest effort, the greatest sacrifice, on the part of the couriers. So deeply lie these roots that even you and I may call into instant operation a vast and costly service composed of millions of persons every one of whom will, if need be, risk, his life to deliver our message.

Stamp collecting is concerned with the medium by which we command these modern couriers to their tasks — the postage stamp — and with the history of the mails as may be revealed upon the stamps and the envelopes to which they are attached.



Introduction

STAMP COLLECTING—Philately—is a Hobby. It is one of the great cultural pursuits of our nation and of several other nations, notably England, France, Germany, and Switzerland, of importance in the order named. It is of lesser importance but nevertheless with substantial numbers of followers in the Benelux nations, Italy, Spain and generally throughout Europe.

In Asia, China and Japan have long been important centers of Stamp collecting. The Straits Settlements, Thailand, Indonesia, India, all have important philatelic centers and in such remote places as Afghanistan and Ethiopia one will find stamp dealers. Many nations officially take cognizance of the hobby and newly born nations have embraced the hobby as an important means of developing the "person to person" efforts to have all peoples of the world understand and live at peace with each other.

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Israel, one of the newest of the world's nations, has vigorously taken up the hobby on a large scale and has even successfully completed an international philatelic exhibition of considerable consequence.

With each passing year new millions become avid stamp collectors, indeed, the hobby is a virile and dynamic force for good that is constantly growing throughout the civilized world.

So far as anyone can determine the "fad," so-called at the period, began in England shortly after the world's first postage stamp, the famous British "Penny Black" bearing a portrait of Queen Victoria, made its debut in the world. Historians trace the origin of the hobby to an advertisement which appeared in a London newspaper to the effect that a young lady, desirous of accumulating enough of the new postage stamps with which to paper her room would be grateful for any such that might be sent to her.

Still other historians claim that this original advertisement of a person desiring to "collect" postage stamps was actually a hoax perpetrated by the founder of the earliest and one of the greatest philatelic firms of the world, Stanley Gibbons, Ltd. By this means, it is said, the firm supplied itself with a large stock of stamps. Whether this first advertisement was a hoax as suggested or was indeed the actual desire of a bona fide young lady, the fact that there was such an advertisement and that this was the first public expression of someone desiring to collect postage stamps seems rather well established.

From these humble beginnings the great hobby made its start. Being of British origin it may reasonably be

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expected that it would find many followers throughout the British Empire, and such is the fact. Wherever British subjects reside, there you will find stamp collectors in numbers, and for many years London was the great market place where one could buy or sell stamps. The outbreak of World War II, however, with all of its restrictions on the exchange of currency between nations, and particularly with Great Britain itself finding it necessary to restrict, even forbid, the exporting of her monetary wealth, saw the center of the stamp world shift from London to New York, where it is located to this very day.

It is interesting to note that this initial start was an unabashed desire of an individual to indulge in a hobby — that of collecting a large quantity of postage stamps. Throughout the years the basic idea — the prime mover that "here is a hobby"— has remained unchanged. This has been the foundation upon which there has been built a vast empire of collectors residing in every civilized country in the world. And the monetary values of their combined collections are of such great proportion that no one could seriously essay an estimate.

Because of the vast monetary wealth represented in these collections, the general public is often treated to highly colored stories that would lead them to believe that this is a hobby concerned with the mundane pursuit of wealth, that collectors are shrewd people who know how to buy stamps today for a song and have merely to wait a few years to reap a bonanza by selling their treasures. This belief has become so widespread that in recent years many thousands of persons have been induced to storm their local Post Offices every time a new stamp is issued in order to buy a sheet, or many sheets, of

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the new stamps which they have been led to believe will greatly increase in value within a few years.

In another chapter we will discuss at length this idea of monetary "investment" in stamp collecting and will, we believe, expose it for what it really is — a hoax pure and simple that has grown like a cancer on the principal body of stamp collecting. If it be your plan to "get in on some easy money" by buying stamps that are sure to be "good," then do not waste your time reading further in this book. The bug has probably bitten you hard and nothing I can say will deter you from your avowed purpose.

If, on the other hand you have a serious interest in discovering the great pleasure that has enthralled millions of your fellow human beings in all parts of the world, then, I believe, my words will help you along that path.

In the following pages we shall trace some of the classic stories of great treasures that have been found and recount some of the lesser finds such as can, and will, happen in your collecting activities once you have learned the ropes, for treasure trove plays an important part in philately and the finding of a treasure is one of the most thrilling experiences of stamp collecting. Some of these tales took place several years ago, still others happened only yesterday.

We shall explore the technical aspects of the hobby so that we may know treasure when we see it. We shall study the processes by which postage stamps are made, delve into the ancient and modern art of paper making, learn the art of steel engraving, the rudiments of lithography, and the different means of providing those little holes that surround the edges of your stamps. For all

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of these points are necessary and fundamental to the true philatelist and all enter into the hobby in greater or less degree — as you yourself will decide — for this complete freedom of self-expression is one of the most pleasant aspects of stamp collecting. There is need of basic knowledge but you will make your own rules of what you wish to collect.

We shall explore briefly the history of the modern world for we must know the whys and the wherefores of stamps in general and some stamps in particular. And we shall learn in passing just how closely postage stamps, and the service they represent, are associated with the progress of civilization over the centuries. Truly it has been repeated that stamp collecting is educational and in our introduction to the hobby we shall learn just how fascinating education may be. For here is an entirely new, and tremendously interesting, contact with the world and what makes it "tick." Every turn is a challenge, a quiz, that gets a firm hold on you and won't let you give up until you have triumphantly discovered the answer.

We shall review the many kinds of postage stamps and their functions and, perhaps to our surprise, we shall discover that some nations are actually in business issuing postage stamps solely to be sold to stamp collectors, that this income is in several instances the sole revenue of these nations and stamps their principal export! We shall learn that postage stamps in modern times are issued for so many reasons other than the payment of postage on a letter that often this prosaic duty has been forgotten entirely. We shall study the various ways of collecting stamps, general collecting, specializing, "subject" collect-

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ing and all of the many ways in which collectors diligently pursue their hobby.

And lastly, but far from least, we shall learn the mechanics of the hobby: how to start, the tools needed and how to use them, the literature available and where to get it, stamp clubs, stamp dealers, exhibitions, ways and means of adding stamps to your collection, duplicates and what to do with them, and all of the other problems that you are likely to encounter.

In fact, we shall explore the world of stamp collecting to its last detail. Shall we begin?

P.H.T.

CHAPTER 1

Genesis

FROM earliest times the peoples of the world have sought means of communicating with each other. These efforts may be traced to the very mists of antiquity, and before any means of written thoughts had come into use we may be sure that runners carried spoken messages between tribes. Inca runners carried *quipus* — a strange collection of cords tied to a stick with the cords knotted so that the



Inca courier.

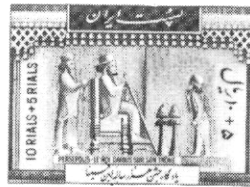
runner bearing them could slip each through his fingers and, as in counting rosary beads, recite the messages the

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knots recalled to memory. The Dak runners of India wore bells around their necks to frighten away the beasts of the jungle as they ran their courses through the night. Darius of the ancient land we now know as Iran had established a vast and efficient system of delivering messages to his governors and military leaders. This great system inspired Herodotus to write of them the words which are presently emblazoned in the stone facade of the great Post Office in New York: "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night, stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." Everywhere that tribes had formed and the beginnings of civilization had started, the first need was for communication with other tribes, and systems of communication were set up according to the need and the ability of the rulers to maintain them. No one may claim the origin of the postal system. In one form or another it existed in all places on the earth wherever there were people, in all of the civilizations that have preceded our own.



Dak runner of India.



King Darius on throne.

All of these primitive systems existed for the benefit of the rulers. They were maintained at public expense but the runners were permitted to carry only the messages of the tribal chiefs or of later-day kings and emperors.

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It remained for Augustus Caesar to establish what most closely resembles our modern postal system. His *Cursus Publicus* had routes throughout the Roman Empire and the carriers were permitted to carry messages of certain high government officials not necessarily connected with the Emperor's household. It is from this system that we get our present name "post" office. Along the roads traveled by the Roman couriers posts were established to mark the distances each should travel. Often a hostelry would be established at the post and hence we derive the word "post" and later "office."

Later the merchants of the Hanse towns along the Baltic coast set up their Hanseatic League and employed a postal service for their own convenience and occasionally, as a favor perhaps, a message would be carried for someone not a member of the league. Still later the Counts of Thurn and Taxis established a private postal system that covered much of Europe and made their services available to all who would pay their fees. This



Franz von Taxis (1450-1517), postmaster general of Austria, the Low Countries, Spain, Burgundy, and Italy.

was the beginning of our modern postal system. In addition to the system operated by the houses of Thurn and Taxis, which, incidentally, was dignified by royal

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grant, there were various other private postal systems that more or less flourished in parts of Europe. One of these was conducted by the universities of France which had found it expedient to have some means available for the students to write home to get money.

In London in 1680 —almost two hundred years before the introduction of a modern postal system—William Docwra set up a "Penny Post" for the collection and delivery of letters within the limits of London City, which is a model of efficiency even to this day. Docwra established letter boxes at designated points throughout the city as well as various branch offices. Letters would be collected from the boxes every hour and would be stamped at the branch office the exact time of their collection. This post proved so popular and so lucrative that Docwra became involved with the Duke of York who claimed royal prerogative for the delivery of mail. In due course Docwra's post was taken over as a government function. It continued in operation until 1800 when it became "The Two-penny Post."

Up to this point the postal systems of the ancients and even of the "moderns" had left no visible trace of their existence except through accounts of historians. There are exactly thirteen examples of Docwra's post known to stamp collectors. Also, there are desultory evidences of some of the previous posts like clay tablets of Sargon's time preserved in the museums. But it was not until the establishment of a truly public system of posts that we have collectible evidence in the form of letters. More particularly, it was not until the introduction of postage stamps that this evidence became of general interest throughout the civilized world.

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Stamps did not usher in our present day postal systems. They did, as we shall presently see, inaugurate an idea that was to revolutionize all previous ideas for the carrying of mail.

However, to gain a true picture of the great importance postage stamps have played in developing contemporary civilization, we must inspect the conditions that existed just prior to their advent.

England's postal system was more or less well established along designated postal roads throughout the kingdom. Overseas mail was carried at the sufferance of ship owners and masters. In our own country Governor Lovelace of New York had established regular posts between Albany and New York City (the old Albany Post Road, now U. S. Route 9), and between New York and Boston (the old Boston Post Road, now U. S. Route 1). Such carriers as were employed were abjured not to drink or use vile language. Later Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster for the Colonies and had in operation a considerable postal system.



*Benjamin Franklin, first
postmaster general of
the United States.*

All such systems were open to the public and anyone might send a letter, the postal fees for which were "collect on delivery." By adopting simple codes persons could

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indicate the message within by using a pre-arranged form of address. Hence when the letter was offered by the courier, the person to whom it was addressed could read the message from the address and would then refuse the letter. The postal service would get nothing for such "deliveries." We need not wonder at these devious methods of cheating the posts when we view the cost of sending a letter. Each letter was charged for the distance it traveled — seldom less than sixpence and often several shillings, a sizable sum indeed in days when in all the land there was not a laborer earning as much as one dollar a day the year around!

Meanwhile James Watts had invented his mechanical monster — the steam engine — that was to change the living patterns of the whole world. And the industrial development of the world demanded establishment of a better postal system.



Sir Rowland Hill, creator of the first postage stamp.

In 1837 Sir Rowland Hill, after having completed exhaustive studies of the postal service then in effect, made public his revolutionary idea. This was, reduced to its simplest expression, merely the fact that it cost no more to deliver a letter a hundred miles than it did to

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deliver one a few city blocks. After three years of pushing his claims the idea was officially adopted and along with it the means of collecting postage in advance — the postage stamp.



*The British Tax Stamp
which led to the American
Revolution.*

Some people claim that the postage stamp was an "invention" but such would not seem to be the case, for stamps had been used for collecting revenues for many years previous to the introduction of their use to collect postage. Indeed, the Stamp Tax Act brought about the "Boston Tea Party" and, eventually, the American Revolution. "Taxation without representation," the ringing words that called a new nation to arms, sprang from the use of revenue stamps.

The world's first postage stamp, Great Britain's famous "Penny Black," did present somewhat of an innovation in that it was gummed on the back. This caused consider-

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able public comment at the time for many considered the idea of "slobbering over the back of Queen Victoria's face an affront not to be countenanced. Others objected strenuously to the use of canceling devices, claiming that to smear the Queen's face was even a greater affront.



The "Penny Black" of Great Britain issued on May 6, 1840, is the first government-issued postage stamp.

Simultaneously with issuing of the first adhesive stamp, Great Britain also issued the world's first government-stamped envelope and letter sheet. This, the famous "Mulready Envelope," caused an even greater public expression than did the adhesive stamp. The Mulready Envelope and its counterpart, the letter sheet, resembled nothing even closely approximating the modern stamped envelopes that are so common today. William Mulready, one of the foremost artists of the time, chose as his design an allegorical figure of Britannia dispatching messages to all of the world. The design, now recognized as one of great beauty and meaning, brought forth a flood of derision in the press, and entrepreneurs, quick to see a good thing, quickly made up envelopes caricaturing the Mulready design. Commenting on the new stamps and

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Mulready envelope, symbolizing the far-flung British Empire.



One of the many Mulready caricatures.

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envelopes the *Ingoldsby Legends* contained the following ditty:

*"The manager rings,
And the prompter springs
To his side in a jiffy, and with him he brings
A set of those odd-looking envelope things,
Where Britannia (who seems to be crucified) flings
To her right and her left funny people with wings
Amongst Elephants, Quakers, and Catabaw Kings;
And a taper and wax,
And small Queen's heads, in packs,
Which, when notes are too big, you're to stick
on their backs."*

The "Queen's heads," of course, were the adhesive stamps.

This furor and ridicule might well have ruined Rowland Hill's whole idea and, in fact, did result in the withdrawing of the Mulready Envelope. But the need for a better postal system was so pressing, and Hill's plan of universal postage proved so completely to satisfy the demand, that the stamp idea stuck and became the basis of every postal system of the world today. For a few cents, or whatever the rate may be, anyone in any civilized country in the world may send a letter a few city blocks or many thousands of miles.

Rowland Hill's universal postage idea worked well within the limits of each country where it was adopted. However, difficulties were encountered when mail was to be transported over international boundaries. This involved the negotiation of separate postal treaties between nations — a cumbersome arrangement which caused no end of confusion and, not infrequently, the stoppage of mail delivery when treaties had expired or could not be negotiated. Dr. Heinrich von Stephan, the first postmaster

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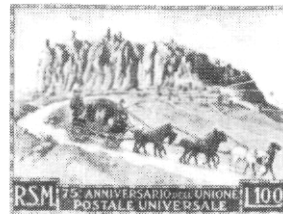
of the German Empire, labored strenuously for the establishment of some form of an international union that would permit the flow of international mail with the same ease that existed for delivery of mail within a single country. His efforts resulted in the formation of the



Dr. Heinrich von Stephan, father of the Universal Postal Union.

Universal Postal Union in 1875. All civilized nations have become members and since its foundation, the U.P.U. has insured the rapid and uninterrupted passage of mail throughout the world. The U.P.U. is one of the greatest achievements of history.

REPUBLIC



Stamps of Nigeria, Indonesia and San Marino commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union.

This, then, is the genesis of the postal systems as we know them today. We have telescoped the centuries and,

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perhaps, have not paid too strict attention to the actual chronological order of the events of ancient history. Such exact placement of dates is important only to the pedantic. The struggles that took place prior to Sir Rowland Hill's reformation are of interest only in that they present the background picture. With the adoption, on 6 May 1840, of Sir Rowland Hill's plan the world's first postage stamp was born. From then to the present, the postage stamp has been the effective instrument that has made communication between people a common property of all of the people of all of the world. Wherever someone can read or write, the postage stamp is within his easy reach and because of this no place is too distant to be reached by means of a letter. It is interesting to note that even an inability to read or write is not always a complete barrier to the use of this marvelous system. In 1939 the Republic of Argentina set up a "phono post" especially for the use of the illiterate. For a few extra cents in postage you could dictate your message into a machine that would record your spoken words on a flexible disk. This you mailed to your friend who, to



Stamps of Argentina issued for mailing of recorded messages.

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"read" it, merely placed the record in a phonograph and listened.

The means of delivering the mail are being constantly improved, from foot runners to modern airplanes, and even rockets. Indeed all of these methods are in contemporary use at various places. Whatever the means, however distant, the greatest and the smallest are at the command of the postage stamp you purchase for a few cents.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

Following the appearance of the world's first postage stamp on May 6, 1840, the next ten years saw the postage stamp idea spread throughout the world. Stamp and stamped envelope issuing countries of this period are listed below by year.

- 1840: Great Britain
- 1841: None
- 1842: New York City (Greig's city despatch)
- 1843: Brazil, Geneva (Switzerland), and Zurich, (Switzerland)
- 1844: None
- 1845: New Haven, Conn., New York City, St. Louis, and Basel (Switzerland)
- 1846: Alexandria, Va., Annapolis, Md., Baltimore, Md., Boscawen, N. H., Lockport, N. Y., Millbury, Mass., Providence, R. I.
- 1847: United States (First General Issue), Mauritius
- 1848: Bermuda, Russia

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1849: Bavaria, Belgium, France

1850: Austria, British Guiana, Hanover, New South Wales, Prussia, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Spain, Switzerland (Federal Administration) and Victoria

After 1850 the practice rapidly spread throughout the civilized world. Many collectors have the mistaken impression that the older a stamp is the more valuable it is. The stamps and stamped envelopes issued from 1840-1850 are perfect examples of the fact that age has no connection with the value of a stamp. For example of the stamps listed above several can be purchased for less than five dollars, one for less than 25¢. Of course, on the other side of the picture a number of those listed above cost well over \$10,000.

ORIGIN OF USE OF POSTAGE STAMPS IN THE UNITED STATES

Strangely enough the use of postage stamps in the United States was not inaugurated by the Government but, instead, by a private carrier, one Alexander M. Greig of New York City. Greig established a "City Despatch Post" on February 1, 1842 which covered New York City as far north as 23rd St. (In those days this was very nearly the city limits.) Evidences that a similar "city post" existed before this, albeit without the use of postage stamps, are noted in Greig's circular announcing his new post. Greig issued stamps, bearing a portrait of Washington, printed from line engraved plates.

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A few months after founding this post Greig sold out to the U. S. Government and the post became known as the "United States City Despatch Post." The government began operation of this purely local post on August 16, 1842 under an Act of Congress of some years earlier which had authorized such local delivery.

The Act of Congress of March 3, 1845, effective July 1, 1845, established uniform postal rates throughout the nation. But it was not until 1847 that Congress authorized the general use of postage stamps.

Thus there were two gaps in the sequence of events when no postage stamps were authorized by the government but during each of which postage stamps were, in fact, being used by agencies of the government, i.e.:—

1. From August 16, 1842 the government operated in New York City the United States City Despatch Post for which it issued and used postage stamps. (This local post was continued in New York City certainly as late as 1850 and probably longer. It had its counterpart in Philadelphia from 1849.)

2. With the establishment of uniform postage rates effective July 1, 1845, Robert H. Morris, postmaster of New York City took it upon himself to issue his own postage stamps. These bore a portrait of George Washington and were printed from line engraved plates. By arrangement with other postmasters Mr. Morris' postage stamps were generally accepted as evidence of prepayment of postage. Other postmasters, in other cities, followed Mr. Morris' lead and issued their own stamps although few were as elaborate productions as the New York stamp.

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Thus the succession of use of postage stamps in the United States would be 1. Greig's City Despatch (soon the United States City Despatch post) from February 1, 1842; 2. The Postmaster provisional stamps (notably New York) from July 14, 1845 and, 3. The first general issue of postage stamps authorized by Congress and which were issued on July 1, 1847.



The first general issue of the United States.

CHAPTER 2

There Are Many Kinds of Stamps



WHEN THE FIRST STAMP was issued, and for a number of years thereafter, stamps were completely functional. They were issued to pay postage on letters. It was not long, however, before other ideas crept in. Naturally enough, if a postage stamp could carry a picture of the ruling monarch it could also be the means of publicizing other things. Probably the first country to break away from the traditional portrait of the sovereign or the national coat of arms as the design for stamps was the Province of Canada, whose first stamp was issued in 1851 and carried as its central motif a beaver. This is the more remarkable for Canada was among the first few nations of the world to issue postage stamps and, being a British possession, one would have thought that the traditional portrait of Queen Victoria would have been used. The reason for this break away from tradition, a tradition by the way that still persists to this very day in Great Britain, is not known. The beaver was an important animal in the economy of Canada at that time and

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evidently was considered of greater importance for picturing on a postage stamp than the ruling monarch. Indeed, there were three stamps in this first series of Canada and the portrait of the Queen occupied the highest denomination, that of her consort, Albert, occupying the intermediate denomination of the trio. Perhaps it was felt that the Queen by occupying the highest denomination had received the place of honor.



Canada marked her 1851 stamps' centenary with a reproduction of the "Three Penny Beaver."

Whatever the reason for Canada's break away from the tradition, the idea of pictorial stamps found wide expression so that by the turn of the century countries everywhere were picturing the scenic spots of their land, products that were of importance or statuary of prominent people. So far so good. A postage stamp was still a postage stamp whatever picture it carried. In 1876 an entirely new idea was introduced, and by no less a nation than the United States when, to commemorate the Centennial Exposition, the Government caused to be issued a special stamped envelope. Thus was born the commemorative stamp, an idea that was eventually to capture the imagination of nations throughout the

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF STAMPS

world and to be used by a few small countries to replenish from collectors' pocketbooks the national treasuries. A commemorative stamp such as was first issued was still an ordinary postage stamp. It differed from the ordinary stamp only in that it was issued for a short period of time and in honor of a special event.



*United States Centennial
envelope, the world's first
commemorative stamp.*

But if a stamp could be issued to commemorate a special event, then why could not a stamp be issued to raise funds for something special?

That horrible thought was given birth in 1897 when New South Wales issued two stamps to raise funds with which to build a home for consumptives. It is an idea that has cost stamp collectors many millions of dollars and one which has accounted for a large portion of all of the modern stamps issued in late years. The plan was simple. Stamps were issued in double denomination, but had postal franking power for only a portion of their face value. The other portion was donated to the charity for which they were issued.

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At first such stamps were designated by collectors as "charity" stamps. But the uses to which they were put soon made the word "charity" a charitable description indeed of their purpose. Before long these stamps were issued to raise funds for the Red Cross, invalided soldiers, poor children, war orphans, restoration of cathedrals, the building of national monuments and lighthouses and even



Stamps issued to raise funds for French war victims, the reconstruction of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna and for Spanish Red Cross.

to help eradicate a grasshopper plague. There is no end to the purposes that can be, and have been, dreamed up to issue postage stamps with the idea of raising funds



Graf Zeppelin stamps.

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF STAMPS

for some "worthy" project. The list of countries that have engaged in this practice is without end and the idea persists in ever wider circles. Even our own nation is not completely with clean hands. In 1930 we indulged the operators of the airship Graf Zeppelin by issuing a set of three stamps in denominations of 65\$, \$1.30, and \$2.60 and turned over the Zeppelin Co. most of the money from those that were used to mail letter aboard the airship.

Long since, the catalogues of the world have ceased to call these "charity" stamps in favor of the more descriptive name, "semi-postal" stamps.

While many modern semi-postal stamps are frankly intended to raise funds for some stated purpose by including upon the stamp itself an extra charge, others are not quite so obvious. The "charity" idea has often been hidden in devious manners. Thus Spain and Portugal, to mention two specific instances, have issued long sets of stamps which of themselves in no way indicate that they were intended to raise funds. These stamps were placed on very limited sale on certain designated days and would not be good for postage on any days other than the specified ones. The general public, of course, would be largely unaware of this restricted use and few of the stamps would actually find their way into the ordinary postal use. However, such stamps were indeed postage stamps and were perfectly good for postage purposes if used on the specified days. Hence, they received wide distribution among stamp collectors and thus provided large sums of money without the necessity of the Post Office performing any service. Such income is, of course, pure "velvet" and can amount to

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a very considerable sum. In the case of the Pombal series issued by Portugal in 1925 an extremely ingenious idea was employed. With this issue it was made mandatory that on certain specified days the Pombal stamps were required in addition to ordinary postage stamps. Failure to use them resulted in "postage due" being charged and for this purpose special Pombal postage-due stamps were issued. The money thus raised was to be used to build a national monument to the Marquess of Pombal. In this case the entire population of the country was directly taxed. Also, of course, many hundreds of thousands of the stamps were acquired by collectors.



Marquess of Pombal.

It is not always necessary to issue special stamps to raise substantial funds. Very small countries, where the use of the mail is negligible, have found that, by issuing attractive and numerous postage stamps, a very large sum of money will accrue to the treasury through sale to stamp collectors. Thus the Republic of San Marino has for many years found one of its principal exports to be postage stamps for collectors. Other nations have found this to be a very lucrative source of revenue.

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF STAMPS

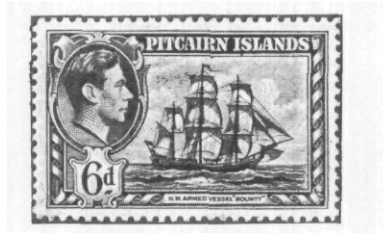


Attractive stamps of tiny Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino.

Many British colonies also benefit substantially from the sale of attractive postage stamps, a particular example being Pitcairn Island. The 177 people living on this tiny island possession of Great Britain did very well without postage stamps until 1940. But suddenly the world became acutely conscious of this island through the book and the moving picture *Mutiny on the Bounty*. The possibilities of this situation were too good to be overlooked so a very attractive set of postage stamps were issued picturing Fletcher Christian, Captain Bligh, the "Bounty" and other characters who had captured the imagination of the world. This set of stamps has found a place in millions of stamp albums and continues to be of top-ranking popularity among collectors. No figures are released by the British Crown Agents on the amounts realized from the sale of postage stamps, but we may

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conservatively assume that this set of stamps may well have produced a greater revenue to the British Government than the profit made by either the authors of the book or the producers of the motion picture.



*H. M. Armed Vessel
"Bounty" on a stamp of
Pitcairn Islands.*

Since 1921 the United States Post Office has maintained a Philatelic Agency at Washington, D.C., for the sole purpose of supplying unused postage stamps to collectors. In recent years these sales have amounted to over three million dollars each year. The first year of its operation the Agency grossed only about fifty thousand dollars! To date, the gross sales of the Agency have totaled over fifty million dollars. This represents money paid at face value for postage stamps, almost all of which will never be put to use—a source of clear profit to the Post Office Department!

Quite naturally, it was not long after the United Nations had established its headquarters in New York City that it issued a series of postage stamps. Such stamps can not be used anywhere in the world for the prepayment of postage except in the single Post Office at the UN building in New York.

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF STAMPS



Since the first issue of 1951 the UN Postal Administration has produced over a score of different issues to commemorate the various activities of the parent organization. The issues are carefully and regularly prepared and issued in limited quantity which has made them quite attractive to a multitude of collectors.

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Stamps of countries born since 1948. From left to right: Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Israel, Ryukyu Islands, Indonesia, Libya.

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF STAMPS



Different kinds of stamps issued by the United States.

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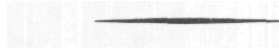
As new governments come into being, new stamps almost immediately follow, for the potential source of profit from the sale of attractive stamps to collectors is widely appreciated.

Such issues are not to be confused with the semi-postal stamps which are a nuisance of no small proportions to many collectors. Mostly such stamps are very beautiful and have a very strong sales appeal to youngsters and embryo collectors.

So far we have only discussed stamps that are used for regular postage purposes. There are still many different kinds of stamps to provide for the various services performed by a modern postal system. The United States, for instance, has issued stamps for postage due, special delivery, registration, parcel post, special handling, parcel post postage due, newspapers, carriers and airmail. Some of these are in current use. Other purposes for which stamps have been issued by various countries are for postal tax, war tax, use of government departments (also once issued by the U.S.) and other similar functions of the post office that require special accounting of funds received from these services. It is easy to see how the use of special stamps simplifies bookkeeping.

CHAPTER 3

About Stamp Collectors



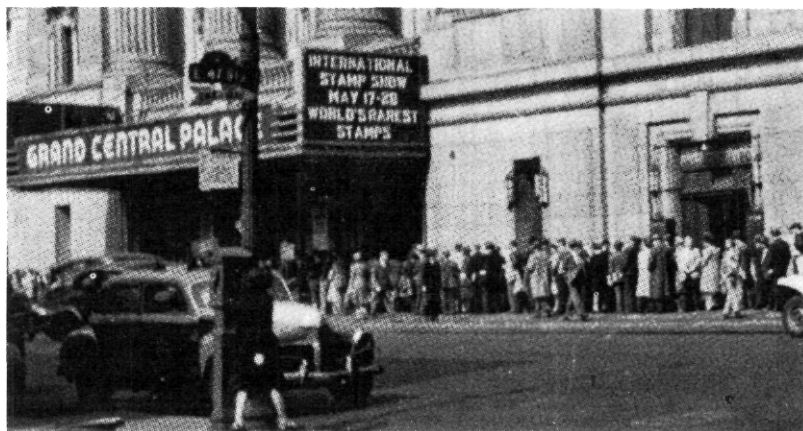
THE PEOPLE began to gather early. By 9 A.M. they stood from building to curb, as much as ten abreast, and the lines extended in both directions along the west side of Lexington Avenue, around the corners of 46th and 47th streets along both long blocks back to Park Avenue, and on the other side of Park Avenue thousands more awaited the opportunity to cross.

Restaurant owners, storekeepers and the managers of hotels along the east side of Lexington Avenue opposite Grand Central Palace made another little gathering as they stood in wonder at what was going on across the street.

"What's going on?" each newcomer to the group watching would ask. "What's all the commotion about?"

"Stamp collectors!" someone would answer and the newcomer would join the silent group staring in amazement at the enormous queues waiting for the doors of Grand Central Palace to open.

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Crowds waiting for doors to open at CIPEX 1947.

Yes, stamp collectors! Little ones and big ones, small boys and aged women, millionaires and street urchins — stamp collectors all. Before the week had passed two hundred and fifty thousand of them had filled Grand Central Palace to its eaves from early morning to ten o'clock at night. They were all there to attend the Centenary International Philatelic Exhibition. The hotels were crammed, restaurants could not handle the crowds awaiting to eat, stores of every description saw their stocks depleted beyond belief. It was a bonanza. As one restaurateur said, "I've seen plenty of crowds at the 'Palace' but this beats anything I've ever known!"

Within minutes after the doors at the "Palace" had opened that first day the fire wardens called on the show directors to advise that the inaugural ceremonies would have to be stopped. "Too many people, get that band out of here or we shall have to close the doors!" was the

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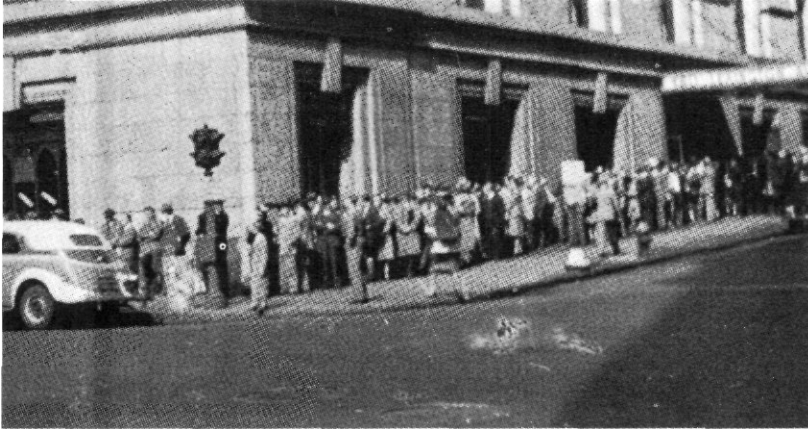


Photo by Adrien Boutrelle, N. Y.

order. The radio broadcast was cut short, the band scurried for cover — and still the people poured in through the doors in such great numbers that the doors were finally closed for a few minutes to allow the crowds to disperse through the three huge floors of the building which the stamp show occupied. It was only for a few minutes, to be sure, that the doors remained closed but that they were closed at all is some kind of a record that probably has never been equaled at the "Palace."

This phenomenon was repeated in 1956 when another great International Philatelic Exhibition was staged in New York City. This time one of the shows to open New York City's fabulous Coliseum. And here, again, the enormous crowds were repeated, hotels crowded to overflowing, restaurants unable to cope with the multitude.

In fact, it is a phenomenon that is repeated in New York City once every ten years when, at a cost of over

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a quarter million dollars stamp collectors from all corners of the earth gather to compete with each other to determine the world's finest collections. There are annual, National Stamp Shows, at which many thousands gather each year in various cities throughout the nation, more about these later, but the Great International Shows staged usually once every ten years, are the most obvious expression of the far-flung realm of Philately.

Non-collectors who have stood by and watched these phenomena have intently studied the people waiting in line for their chance to enter the great halls where the exhibitions take place. And,, no doubt, have tried to discover something about them, some peculiarity, that would give their avocation away. But they have studied in vain, Stamp collectors are just people.

There are, to be sure, "an awful lot" of stamp collectors in America, in the world. Just how many no one really knows. It has been estimated that there are twenty-five million in the United States. No one has been able to fute this estimate, but then no one has been able to prove it. The time was, not so long ago, when a stamp collector admitted to his hobby rather sheepishly. He wasn't ashamed of it but then he didn't go out proclaiming it to the world. If cornered, he might state in defense of his hobby that King George V and a lot of other crowned heads were also stamp collectors and that, in fact, stamp collecting was known as the "hobby of kids and kings." The "kids and kings" sounded great but a mere adult, being neither, found little solace in being classed with either.

Then came President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a stamp collector and made no bones

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*"I owe my life to my hobbies, especially stamp collecting."
—Franklin D. Roosevelt*

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about it. He saw to it that his Postmaster General James A. Farley, issued lots of new stamps, and the President even helped design some of them, as when he arranged that the "Presidential Series" should picture the presidents in their order of succession according to the denomination of the stamp. Thus President Washington's portrait appeared on the one-cent stamp, John Adams on the two-cent, and so on right up the line to Grover



Stamps of the "Presidential Series."

Cleveland whose portrait appears on the twenty-two-cent stamp. They couldn't carry the idea any further, for stamps after the twenty-two-cent denomination skipped to twenty-four cents. Harrison, McKinley, "Teddy" Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding and Coolidge all appeared on the higher denomination stamps in order of succession but the continuity of the denominations was broken after Cleveland. Many think it was a mistake not to carry the numerical sequence of the denominations right up to the twenty-ninth president even if there

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was no need for such stamps. Hoover could not be included as he was, and is at the time this book is being written, still living, and by law we may not picture living persons on our stamps or currency.

With President Franklin D. Roosevelt openly espousing the cause, stamp collecting came right out into the open. It was no longer confined to "kids and kings"; it now included "Presidents" as well and that made it good enough for anybody and everybody. Stamp collecting, of course, had millions of followers before Roosevelt became President. But no one can question that after he became President stamp collectors "stood up to be counted." And no one can question that there are a great many more collectors now than before he became President.

Eventually the whole world was saddened by the tragic death of President Roosevelt; but his memory is preserved in philately by scores of postage stamps issued by many nations including our own, in his honor. It is fitting tribute to the man who did so much to promote the hobby he loved so well.

The International Philatelic Exhibitions held in New York City every ten years are but part of a series of such great International stamp exhibitions held by many nations throughout the world. Hardly a year passes without some important international show taking place in some part of the world. Such Exhibitions have been held in Great Britain, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Israel, Philippines, Cuba, Brazil, Uruguay, India and South Africa, to mention but a few. Thus in no small measure stamp collectors contribute to the common goal of international good-will by all thinking people.

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Many of the International exhibitions held in other nations are supported by government subsidy. Usually such subsidy consists of a special stamp issued to commemorate the exhibition the proceeds from the sale of which are used for the exhibition.



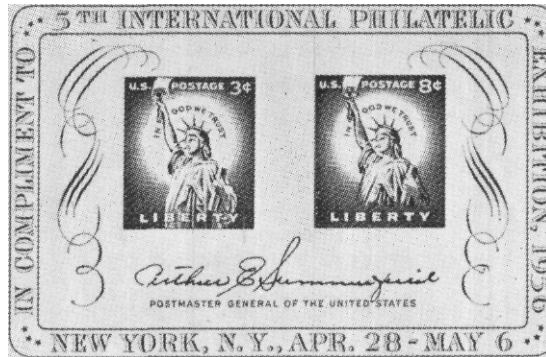
The Fipex Issue celebrated the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition (April 28 to May 6, 1956). Stamp, photography and auto exhibitions, held simultaneously, opened the newly completed Coliseum at Columbus Circle, New York, facing Columbus Monument.

In the United States the great International exhibitions are held without benefit of government subsidy. Our Post Office does take cognizance of these affairs by issuing special stamps to commemorate the event. Proceeds from the sale of these, goes to the Post Office. The sale of these has run to a total as high as one million dollars on occasion. Thus, while at the 1956 International Exhibition the Post Office did undertake the cost of constructing its own facilities at the show, far from being subsidized the U. S. International Exhibitions have proven a source of considerable income to the Post Office.

To stage one of these great exhibitions, stamp collectors and stamp dealers, hundreds of them, subscribe a fund to launch the affair. Then each gives up an enor-

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mous amount of time—often extending over two years—serving on committees necessary to stage the event. More often than not this voluntary service involves considerable financial sacrifice, even direct out of pocket expense, for none of which are the volunteers reimbursed. To complete the picture these same workers turn around and pay their own admission to the show, pay dues into the sponsoring society, and, when the occasion demands, make outright donations.



Fipex Souvenir Sheet

The only reimbursement involved is that of the original "guarantee fund." If, as and when the show has been able to pay off all of its expenses and anything is left over the subscribers to the Guarantee Fund are reimbursed to the amount of their pledges.

The income from such exhibitions is derived in a large measure from rental of the exhibition frames and rental of dealer booths. The same volunteers who have subscribed the Guarantee Fund, have served on the committees now pay the going fees to rent frames needed to exhibit their collections.

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What manner of men and women are these who give their all so willingly, so enthusiastically?

They are just plain folk, whether rich or poor, who have discovered a hobby that has enriched their lives and made them "kinsfolk" with myriads of people all over the world. They are white and colored, jew and gentile; they are little kids and grown adults, learned professors and freshman students, bank presidents and bank clerks, millionaires and near paupers. They are, in fact, people from every walk of life, happy and eager to work together to enlarge and promote their hobby, a hobby in which they have found a common denominator with their fellow man. There are no better people in all the world!



CHAPTER 4

About Stamp Dealers

THE LITTLE OLD LADY called the expressman to pick up the rather large and nondescript package. This done she sat at her writing desk and addressed a letter.

"Dear Mr. Thorp:

I will not be buying any stamps for a while as my son and daughter-in-law have moved from this city for the West. They have asked me to live with them in their new home and have sent me plane tickets. I have arranged here to take care of all of my furniture and things but I did not wish to trust my stamp collection with the other things and it was too large a package to carry with me on the plane: so I am sending all of my stamps — everything — to you. Please keep these for me until I write you from my new home which I shall do if all goes well. However, I am not too sure that all will go well with me as my heart is not what it used to be and I fear the altitude may not be good for me. Only yesterday, while I was packing my things I blanked out and came to lying on the floor. My doctor has advised me to be very careful but I did not tell him of the plane trip as I was afraid he would not let me go. Neither my son nor daughter-in-law knows of my condition

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for I did not wish to alarm them and that is another reason I am writing you as I am. If all goes well I shall arrive at my new home with my son and daughter-in-law and no one will be the wiser. However, should anything happen to me I know that my stamp collection will be in good hands. Not that it is worth much but, should anything happen I wish my son and his family who know nothing about stamps to receive whatever little it may be worth. Just to be on the safe side I am carrying a letter to my son with me and in it I have instructed him to write to you about this. You will know that the letter is from my son for his wife's middle name is Elsie and you may identify him by verifying this fact.

I know this letter sounds morbid but it is not intended so. It is just that all of my life I have been careful to keep things in order and, in view of my present health, I do wish everything to be in order in the event that anything should happen.

Sincerely yours,
Martha Smith Brown
(Mrs. John King Brown)

I perused this letter with some surprise. I knew Mrs. Brown merely as a client who had made a few small purchases, in total amount perhaps ten or twelve dollars. All of my contacts with her had been by mail for she resided some hundreds of miles away in a distant state. In all we had exchanged possibly a dozen letters in two years. Always her letters had been marked with the same meticulous explanation of her wants which marked the present letter. I had, from time to time, written rather detailed answers to some of her questions. It was heart-warming to learn that such impersonal contact had inspired her to demonstrate so complete confidence in myself.

ABOUT STAMP DEALERS

There was nothing to do here but to wait for further instructions from Mrs. Brown — or a letter from her son.

The letter came from the son. The little old lady had never gotten to the airfield. A second heart attack had come quickly. Thanks to her lifetime habit of putting things in order and her kindness in thinking of others her passing left a sweetness that must be inspiring to her dear ones. I shall always remember Mrs. Brown. She must have been a wonderful person.

The incident is completely true excepting only the name of the lady writing the letter. But the feeling of comradeship between dealer and collector which it points up is far from unusual.

This is not just a case of a few well-known dealers being on a friendly basis with a few equally well-known collectors. It is an almost universal attribute of the hobby and exists throughout the country wherever stamps are collected or wherever stamps are bought and sold. Stamp dealers of any center of philatelic activity lunch together, belong to the same societies, plan together and discuss their problems with each other. They support, by becoming members, the various collector societies, attend meetings, serve on committees, help with exhibitions, and serve as judges of competitive exhibitions and no one at any time would ever question their integrity or their fair-mindedness in such matters. When the dealers themselves undertake to sponsor a straight "commercial" stamp show, collectors aid by subscribing to "lounges," holding conventions, and arranging special group luncheons and dinners to take place in connection with the show. Thus each such event, whether it be dealer-inspired or collector-inspired, becomes a meeting place for all

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philatelists in a common effort to attract others to the hobby and thus enlarge their ranks. The advantage to the dealer of having more collectors for possible clients is obvious. Not quite so obvious are the advantages to the collector, yet the motivating force behind all such efforts arises from the common desire, of professional and amateur alike, to do all of these things for the general good.



*Photo by Adrien Boutrelle, N. Y.
View of an American Stamp Dealers Association (ASDA)
show.*

Perhaps in no other business in the world is there so close a bond between professional and amateur.

How did they get that way? A fair question.

Primarily, I think, because every dealer at heart is a collector. He must be, because the financial rewards of

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his occupation are not usually great. And, on the other hand, every collector at heart is a dealer. He, too, has to be a dealer for his hobby is constantly involving him in trading treasures with other collectors and selling stamps for which he no longer has use. While it is beyond doubt that the dealer is the greatest source of supply for the collector, it is equally true that the collector is the greatest source of supply for the dealer.

But, besides the economics involved, the reason for such a close bond lies deeper and on firmer ground. Because the dealer is a professional and stamp collecting is his vocation he spends most of his waking hours handling and studying stamps. He has opportunity to see a great many collections which the ordinary collector cannot see. And he not only has the time to study stamps but, in fact, is required to know them. Hence, in a large way, the dealer is the source of knowledge. But here, again, the situation is not all one-sided by a long shot. The collector specialist usually knows a great deal more about his pet group of stamps than anyone else. The dealer often depends on such specialists for knowledge which he passes along to other collectors. The outstanding feature of the whole relation is that knowledge is exchanged freely either by word of mouth or in articles both professionals and amateurs write in the various philatelic magazines.

Probably the first professional stamp dealer to set up shop in the world was Stanley Gibbons of London, England. In America the father of professional stamp dealers would likely be John W. Scott. Both of these men had a difficult and uncharted course to follow. Both set out early to publish albums and catalogues of the stamps of the world. Both founded firms that grew to be leaders

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but that, in time, were to see competition grow up all around them for the hobby they established soon outgrew the ability of any single person or firm to serve its purpose.

At present in the United States the professional stamp world centers in New York City. Here there are hundreds of stamp shops concentrated along Nassau Street and uptown around 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue. These stamp stores range from one-man specialists, of which there are a great many, to ground-floor stores employing a number of clerks. Also there are a considerable number of individual dealers and firms engaged solely in selling stamps at public auction, and during the season — early fall to late spring — it is not unusual for several such auctions to take place each week. On occasion two or more auctions will be held on the same day although the auction houses try to avoid such conflicts. It would be difficult to estimate the annual turnover in dollars and cents of all of the stamp dealers in New York. Some idea of the size of this business may be gathered from the fact that a single auction firm will have an annual total sales running more than a million dollars.

In New York, too, is located the famous Gimbels Stamp Department. This is somewhat of a miracle of merchandising for the very nature of the stamp business does not lend itself particularly well to department-store methods. However, under the direction of Jacques Minkus, Gimbels Stamp Department has become one of the large ground-floor features of the store and is one of the best-known sources of supply for stamps and albums known to American philatelists. The number of collectors who visit this department runs into hundreds of thousands

ABOUT STAMP DEALERS



During one of frequent exhibits in Gimbel's stamp department, Mr. Bertil Renborg (left), first postmaster of the United Nations, and Mr. Jacques Minkus (right), manager of the stamp department, examine a preview of the first United Nations stamps.

during any year, and all come away amazed at the enormous stock of stamps and the varied supplies that are available. Gimbels Stamp Department is quite probably the outstanding "stamp store" of the world for here one will find not only an extravagant stock of stamps of the world, from the great rarities to the lower priced items, but also every accessory and aid to the hobby that is published or manufactured. Gimbels not only carries in stock all kinds of stamp albums. It really is an amaz-

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ing operation which has gained a national, even international, reputation.

Located in small towns within easy commuting distance of New York are many specialists who prefer to operate their business from their homes. These dealers have international reputations as experts in the fields in which they specialize and are often consulted by, and in turn consult with, the professionals who maintain business establishments in New York or in others of the country's stamp centers. Such dealers are of considerable importance to the fabric of the commercial world of philately for, by and large, they represent a large proportion of the buying power of the advanced collectors, whom they often represent at the public auctions.

Located on Bromfield Street and along Tremont Street is the stamp center of Boston, a city that can proudly boast of being one of the oldest stamp centers in the nation. Here the activity of New York is repeated with stamp auctions, specialists and small stamp stores generously sprinkled throughout the area. And again one will find the specialist dealers located in surrounding towns. Chicago's "Loop" section along South Dearborn Street and its immediate vicinity is another of the nation's important stamp centers. In the shadow of its sprawling City Hall Philadelphia stamp dealers conduct an important business. And in the smaller towns of Pennsylvania, at its Capital, Harrisburg, in Pittsburgh, Allentown, and in many of the other cities, stamp dealers hold forth lustily. In the South, Miami and St. Petersburg and surrounding areas have a sufficient number of stamp dealers to boast two chapters of the American Stamp Dealers Association; and in New Orleans' "Old Quarter"

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along Royal Street one encounters some of the leading dealers of the nation. On the West Coast San Francisco and Los Angeles compete for leadership with a considerable number of well-known professionals located in either city, while to the north Portland and Seattle take the lead.

There are stamp stores in Denver, Minneapolis, Buffalo, Atlanta, Washington, D. C, and, in fact, in almost every important city of the nation. In neighboring countries one will find important stamp centers at Toronto, Montreal, Havana and Mexico City. And dotted throughout the United States, in small towns and cities there are literally thousands of "approval" dealers conducting their business through the mail. Many are part-time dealers who piece out their income in this interesting manner and some devote full time to the project, doing what by all standards is a considerable annual turnover.

All larger dealers in the principal cities and the specialist dealers are personally known to each other, for they gather at the national conventions and great stamp exhibitions which are held periodically at various cities. Such gatherings are of great importance to dealers and collectors alike for often such meetings will be the only occasion when the dealer has opportunity to meet his clients in person and vice versa.

But while this camaraderie exists to such a marked degree among the stamp professionals, each is an independent competing with the other. It is unlikely that any other business is so completely free of "cartels" or restraints. The smallest and the largest operates in a completely free market.

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To "police" their activities, the dealers have formed a national association, the American Stamp Dealers Association, to be a member of which one must subscribe to a "Code of Ethics" which is quite possibly one of the strictest codes of any commercial group. Through this organization disputes are settled by arbitration boards, penalties are levied on those who may break the rules, and thefts and counterfeiters are tracked down. Because of its activities the ASDA not only has saved many thousands of dollars for its members by apprehending thieves but also has similarly aided collectors. Not a few collectors today owe the recovery of their collections to this active dealers organization.

Just how effective it can be was demonstrated when a swindler set up shop in Montreal for the double purpose of swindling dealers and collectors. This fellow sent out "Want Lists" to dealers all over the country. Such requests were accompanied by what appeared to be reputable references. At the same time he solicited orders from collectors. His was a large-scale operation involving over a hundred thousand dollars in both directions. Almost before he got started, however, a report was made to the ASDA Executive Secretary in New York who immediately contacted the postal authorities in Canada. Within hours the swindler was apprehended and caught with the material. Within a month the Canadian authorities had successfully prosecuted the man and sent him to jail. The Canadian postal authorities then returned all stamps to the dealers who had sent them in good faith and, aided by the ASDA, even succeeded in sorting out and identifying the owners of the material which had been unpacked by the thief. When the operation was

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completed, all in a very brief time, practically a hundred per cent recovery had been accomplished. In fact, so quickly was the thing done that many dealers learned of it only when they had received the return of their stamps from the authorities. The same effective aid is offered to collectors who may have been victims of theft or swindle. A report to the ASDA immediately swings into action the machinery of the organization and within days, before the material can be sold, every member throughout the nation and the many overseas members are notified to be on the watch and are supplied with a complete description of the material stolen. When the material is located, as it often is, the thief is apprehended and the material returned to its rightful owner — all without cost to anyone. The ASDA is as quick to act upon the complaint of a collector as it is for a member and all complaints, however trivial, are carefully investigated and the trouble corrected. Still another evidence of the unity of the great family of philatelists!

CHAPTER 5

Stamp Department



In the preceding section we have had much to say about the stamp dealer. Now let us understand the stamp department of a great department store. Of course these, too, are stamp dealers and are just as much a part and parcel of the hobby as the stamp dealers we have been discussing. But under the able leadership of a man of amazing insight the stamp department of a department store fulfills its own special place in the world of Philately.

As we have seen, the hobby traces its origin back to the period shortly after stamps were first issued to the advertisement of the English lady who desired to accumulate enough "penny blacks" to paper her room. Of course this was hardly stamp collecting as it is known today. But within a few years after this inauspicious beginning the great stamp firm of Stanley Gibbons was founded in London and certainly by the 1870's the late John W. Scott had established in this country the firm

STAMP DEPARTMENT

that was to bear his name. Both of these gentlemen were pioneers and promoters. Both realized the necessity of spreading word of the new hobby and both published a great many magazines, albums and catalogs of postage stamps of the world.

Yet it is hardly possible that a hobby, which started in such immature desires as the wish of a young lady to pretty up her bedroom should grow to its present impressive importance unless there had constantly been leaders to promote its growth. Gibbons and Scott were such leaders. Yet were either alive today it is not likely they would recognize the vast avocation they had created. New leaders were needed to keep the hobby abreast of the changing times — and new leaders have constantly appeared to keep the hobby a living thing.

And, of course, with the passing years there were more and more stamps. With the vicissitudes of war more and more nations passed into oblivion or were newly created, all of which issued postage stamps. This multitude of new stamps and new nations created a change in the hobby of collecting stamps. The problem of providing albums and catalogs for all of the world's stamps became ever more pressing and the followers of the hobby began to "specialize." They limited their collecting interests to the stamps of a single country, a group of countries or a particular kind of stamp. This limiting of one's collection was a boom to the existing album and catalog publishers who, following the trend, aided and abetted it by publishing specialized albums. For a while it appeared that the collecting of stamps—all stamps—was to be thwarted by this lack of desire to accept the challenge presented. It was much easier for the album publisher to "go along

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with the gag"—much easier for the stamp dealer to "specialize," build a collection of some particular nation or subject and ignore all other stamps.

But the great mass of stamp collectors were at heart stamp collectors. They didn't want to advance or pursue a hobby in which their activities were restricted by lack of albums or lack of places where they could obtain stamps. Nor did this great backwash of collectors, who were the very warp and woof of the hobby, relish the idea of being forced to go to special stamp stores—usually upstairs—where they had to state their desires according to catalog numbers and be embarrassed because they didn't know about such things and only wished to make a modest purchase at best.

Into this situation came the stamp department of the large Department Stores. At first such departments merely handled packets and the available stamp albums. The manager of one such department, Jacques Minkus, in Gimbel's New York City store, became ever more frustrated at his inability, from the material available, to meet the demands of his clients. More and more he saw the need for better stamp albums, and catalogs. Larger selections of stamps then were available in the "Packets." He sensed, perhaps more than he actually perceived, the demand for stamps and stamp albums for "the man in the street." What he quite probably did not perceive was that stamp collecting needed a leader. Someone to show the way back to the basic principles that had made the hobby so attractive to millions through the world. Jacques Minkus set out to supply the demands of his clients. He listened carefully to all complaints and then published albums designed to meet the collectors' real needs. Then,

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*View of the Gimbel's famous stamp department in
New York City*

Designed by Raymond Loewy

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in 1953, he began publishing a completely new catalog of the postage stamps of the world, a project completed in 1957. In so doing he broke the bonds that had held the hobby to a single mentor in guiding its steps.

The Minkus albums and catalogs became an almost overnight success and lead to his opening stamp departments in many of the leading department stores from coast to coast, with more to come just as fast as he can staff them with competent help.

Perhaps my reader will wonder why I have devoted so much space to the story of Jacques Minkus. It is because that he, through his many stamp departments in the finest stores of the major cities of our nation, has brought stamp collecting back to "Main Street." In the most important stores of almost any great city of our nation the person who is "just a collector"—who desires only to ask a few questions and remain anonymous — may find a place exactly suited to his needs. He may inspect, without fear of being asked to buy something, the thousands of stamps on display. He may ask questions and receive courteous answers, may inspect at first hand the various stamp albums, catalogs and accessories that are available. And, if he desires, may make a purchase in complete anonymity free to go his way and never return if he wishes. Mostly they do return and mostly they appreciate their anonymity. Some, of course, became great friends and favored clients but this takes place only when the buyer wishes it to be so.

Because this is so, many, many thousands of new collectors have taken up the hobby, many thousands of albums and catalogs are sold and all stamp dealers and album publishers have greatly benefited from the multitudes of

STAMP DEPARTMENT

anonymous collectors who visit the stamp department of a great store. It is from these that the advanced collectors of tomorrow are developed.

This new way to sell stamps has broadened the base of the hobby immeasurably and has, indeed, brought stamp collecting out of the stifling "Specialization" period into the free and open desires of the individual. The stamp department of a great store is a fine place to begin collecting—stamps—your needs of the myriad services they perform will never be completely outgrown however advanced you may become.



Young stamp collectors in Gimble's famous stamp department in New York City.

CHAPTER 6

How to Start



IF YOU had decided to remodel your home, one way to start would be the method employed by a friend of mine. He decided to enlarge his bedroom by extending it out over the porch. The month was February and, having decided, he promptly took a sledge hammer and knocked out the wall of the house.

That, to say the least, was a positive method of getting the job underway.

You may be just as drastic in starting your stamp collection. You may, if you be so inclined, go down to the nearest stamp dealer and buy a few thousand unsorted stamps, dump them on your dining-room table and go to work.

After a few hours of frustration trying to put this mess into some semblance of order you will be ready for either of two alternatives! One, chuck the whole idea of building a stamp collection, or, two, call on some experienced help to explain just how it's done.

HOW TO START

The sensible thing to do is to plan your campaign first just as the experienced carpenter would plan how to proceed with the alteration my friend so eagerly jumped into.

To begin with, while stamps are necessary it is also necessary to know what you are going to do with them after you have acquired them. Hence, in addition to stamps you need something in which to place them — an album.

Then you will need something with which to secure them in the album — stamp hinges.

Next you will need something to help you identify the stamps so that you will know where in the album they should be placed — a stamp catalogue. And, you will need the tools for identification — a watermark detector and a perforation gauge. Lastly you will need the tool with which to handle your stamps — a pair of stamp tongs.

Now that all may sound very complicated but, to go back to my friend who remodeled his house, just how far would he have been able to progress after his sledge-hammer antics if he tried to proceed without the aid of a hammer, saw, carpenter's square, spirit level, plane, etc? In other words, no matter how you start, you must have the tools to finish the job. And you must know how to use those tools.

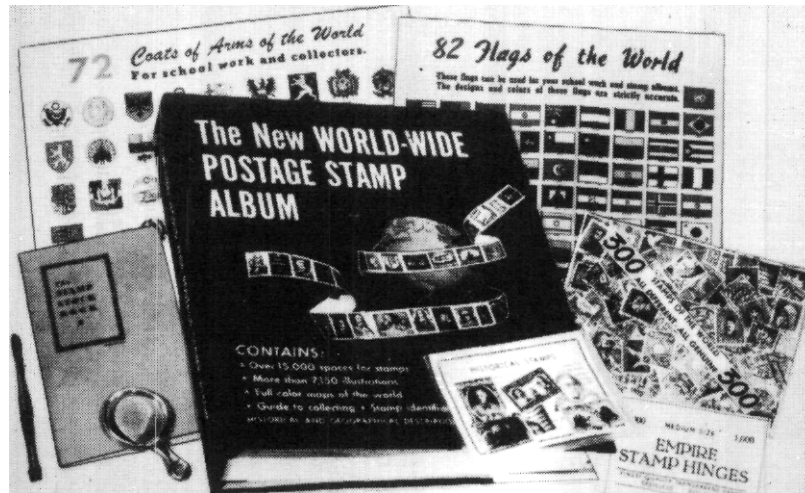
This book will advise you how to select your philatelic tools and how to use them.

Suppose you have some knowledge of collecting stamps. You have seen the collections of others or have even collected yourself to some extent. Now you wish to get into the act and build a "real" collection. Or, let

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us suppose that you know nothing whatever about collecting stamps but think that you would like to do so. In either case the procedure is the same.

The first step is to visit a stamp dealer, or some place where stamps are sold, and acquire a beginner's outfit.



The New World-Wide Outfit is a typical beginner's stamp outfit. It contains a loose-leaf stamp album for over 15,000 stamps, a collection of hundreds of stamps from all over the world. Spaces for modern flags and coats of arms are provided in the album.

There are many of these available but, if none are in stock, any stamp dealer will be able to furnish you with the requisites of such an outfit.

HOW TO START

A good beginner's outfit will consist of the following essentials;

- A stamp album
- Stamp hinges
- A packet of one or two thousand different stamps of the world
- Stamp tongs

To such an outfit it is desirable to add a catalogue of the stamps of the world.

At the very beginning I can hear many of you remonstrating that you only wish to collect United States stamps so why should you acquire a packet of stamps of foreign countries?

The answer is that you can not collect the stamps of the United States, or of any other individual country, without first knowing about stamps in general. Thus, you must acquire the basic knowledge necessary if your collecting is to be the source of pleasure you expect it to be. Hence your ideal beginner's outfit contains a general packet of stamps of the world.

Now such an outfit as I have described will cost very little. In fact, depending upon the album and the number of stamps, it can cost as little as three dollars— or as much as twenty-five or more dollars. For a beginner I suggest an outfit containing a good album — not a toy — along with a packet of not over one or two thousand stamps. Having digested a thousand different stamps, identified each and placed it properly in the album, you will be well on your way to completing your "basic training."

You may advance from this point secure in the knowledge that you are now reasonably well grounded in the

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art of stamp collecting. And you will be ready to enjoy all the pleasures the hobby offers to the myriad of other collectors throughout the world.

Let me caution you against being over ambitious at the start. Be content with an initial packet of one or two thousand different stamps—at the most two thousand. A little story will well illustrate my point. A friend asked me to get a stamp-collecting outfit for his fourteen-year-old son and wanted to know what it would cost. About five dollars, I told him. He scoffed at the idea. Why only five dollars? Why could he not get his son a big album and, instead of a thousand different stamps, why not a big packet? Everything I said against this idea was of no avail. In the end the father bought his son a beautiful large album and a packet of twelve thousand different stamps. The father thought that he was providing his son with something better than average and so giving him a better-than-ordinary start. The boy, of course, was pleased beyond words when he got his Christmas present. Both father and son sat down to sort out the stamps. Here was a real father-son project with hours of pleasure stretching out ahead of them. Certainly a fascinating picture indeed. Yet within a single hour the father-son team was undergoing strained relations. The twelve thousand different stamps presented an unbelievable problem. The son, dependent upon Dad for superior knowledge of all things, was becoming disillusioned rapidly. Dad, at first embarrassed, was getting desperate. He finally mumbled an excuse and went back to his pipe and book. Son continued for a little longer listlessly turning over the pile of stamps. Within a few weeks the stamps found their way into the attic where they lie to this day forgotten.

HOW TO START

On the other hand, a learned doctor, head of one of our great medical schools, visited me one day with a similar request. He wanted to start a collection. I gave him a book such as you are now reading and advised him to study it as it contained the best information I had on the subject. In a day or so he returned and requested "one of those beginner's outfits" the book told about. It was provided and the doctor took it home to apply himself to learning. A few weeks passed before I saw this fellow again but when he returned he was full of confidence. "I've read the book," he said, "and I've worked out the thousand different stamps. Now I feel that I can go ahead. Let me see some of those better albums and let's see about starting a real collection." In due course this man built one of the finest collections of airmail stamps ever assembled and became one of the great collectors of our country. By starting correctly he found the way to enjoy one of the world's greatest cultural hobbies.

The same pleasure awaits you.

Now let us proceed with what to do after you have acquired your beginner's outfit.

CHAPTER 7

The Next Step

HAVING ACQUIRED the beginner's outfit, as described in the foregoing chapter, the next step is to get to work on your treasures.

A good site for operations is the dining-room table as it offers plenty of room and, also, the rest of the family can sit around and put in their "two cents' worth" on occasion. Perhaps, later you will wish to make this a one-man project and retire to your den, but right now it will be more fun to let everyone in on the act for you are going to need much help sorting that initial packet of stamps.

Put your album aside (after it has been duly admired by all and sundry), along with the watermark detector and perforation gauge. Open the packet of stamps and dump the contents out on the table. Now, using your tongs to handle the stamps, start sorting them into three separate piles, as follows:

1. Stamps you can identify as to country of origin. You

THE NEXT STEP



Stamp collecting — the hobby for the entire family.

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will find quite a few of these for you will recognize the names upon them.

2. Stamps you think you know but are not quite sure of. This will constitute a much larger pile.
3. Stamps you cannot identify at all. This will be your largest pile.



a.) Identified.



b.) Questionable.



c.) Unknown.

Now on the first time through the packet of stamps you will not have made much progress. In comparison with the others, Pile No. 1 will be small indeed. But by the time you have gotten to the end of the packet you will have recognized many characteristics on stamps that clearly indicate they have a common origin.

Then you are ready to tackle Pile No. 2 and will be able to put not a few of them into Pile No. 1. And now you will find Pile No. 3 will yield contributions to both Piles Nos. 1 and 2.

You will note that I am advising you to cast into one pile — Pile No. 1 — all stamps that you have identified as to country of origin. Do not try to separate them into

THE NEXT STEP

separate countries. To do so would provide you with so many little piles you would become hopelessly confused. Even the most erudite collector will not attempt to break down the assortment into its ultimate parts in one operation. Make only three general piles as indicated.

Having made two trips through the packet of stamps you will have about exhausted the possibility of identifying further stamps at this time. (You will be surprised how much the rest of the family will have helped you up to this point.)


Now put aside Piles Nos. 2 and 3 and concentrate on Pile No. 1 — the stamps you have identified as to country of origin.

If this is not a large pile you may sort the stamps into separate piles each of a single country. However, if the pile is quite large, you had better proceed by sorting alphabetically: all "A" countries in one pile, "B" countries in another, and so on. Then go back to the "A" countries and sort into individual countries. Again I caution you, do not try to do too many operations in one sorting. No matter how expert you will in time become, you will find it necessary to sort any large accumulation of stamps by stages. If you get to the point where you can identify the country of origin of every stamp issued you still will have to sort into alphabetical piles before attempting to sort a large lot into individual countries.

Now, you've sorted your Pile No. 1 into individual countries. You are ready for your album. Open it and find the proper country for the stamp you wish to mount. All printed albums have an index or are arranged alphabetically, so this will be an easy chore. Now search for an illustration matching the stamp you wish to mount.

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Having found the illustration you may discover that it is of a one-penny stamp whereas the stamp you have is a two-penny but of the same design. You will find that following the illustration in your album there will be several blank spaces. In the more elaborate albums these spaces will contain descriptions of the exact stamp to be placed within them; thus there will be in the space next to the illustration of the one-penny stamp, a catalog number or a description somewhat as follows:

 76	1c 77	2c Red Purple 78	2c Carmine Red 79
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If this description matches your stamp, you have found its proper place and may proceed to mount your stamp in accordance with the instructions given in the next chapter. If a catalog number is given refer to your catalog to obtain a description of the stamp. We explain in a later chapter how to use this catalog.

If the blank spaces in your album do not contain descriptions of stamps, you should mount your stamp — if not of the denomination shown in the illustration — to the right of the illustration. If the stamp is identical to the illustration it should be mounted on top of the illustration.

Most printed albums, especially those beyond the toy stage, contain much valuable information about the countries that issue the stamps and about the stamps

THE NEXT STEP



A printed album page. In addition to illustrations, descriptions indicate locations of stamps in more elaborate albums. Page shown is from The Comprehensive World-Wide Stamp Album, created to hold more than 30,000 stamps.

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themselves. Study this information carefully before mounting your stamps. It will add to your pleasure and your knowledge and, don't forget, it will help you identify some of those stamps in Pile No. 3 which you have not yet tackled.

By now it will have become obvious that stamps do not find their way into the proper spaces in your album without considerable study. But also, by now you will have discovered just how fascinating stamp collecting can be. Take a look at the clock. You will be amazed at how quickly the evening has passed—and at how much you have learned. But, as the saying goes, "you ain't seen nothin' yet!" What about those pictures on the stamps? The men and women, the landscapes and seascapes, the ships and battles, the flora and fauna? All of these are just crying for exploration and all will reveal stories of fascination beyond belief.

But tomorrow is another day. So far you've gotten the feel of collecting. You've learned how to go about sorting stamps and have had a glimpse of the great exploration that lies ahead. There is much more to learn. What, for instance, does one do with the perforation gauge and the watermark detector?

CHAPTER 8

The Tools You Will Use



THE PRINCIPAL tools required by every philatelist are simple and inexpensive. They consist of stamp tongs with which to handle your stamps, a perforation gauge and millimeter rule with which to measure the perforations on your stamps, a watermark detector to help you identify watermarks, and a supply of stamp hinges to attach your stamps to your album.

A satisfactory set of all four items, including a generous package of suitable stamp hinges, may be purchased from any stamp dealer or any place where stamps are sold for about one dollar. You can, if you wish, pay considerably more for fancy gadgets but for all practical purposes the "five and dime" type of tool will be eminently satisfactory. Many an erudite expert operates with such.

A secondary tool, of primary importance if your eyesight is not up to par, will be a good magnifying glass. Most philatelists carry one on their person wherever they

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go. An inexpensive one with a lens of 3 or 4 power will prove very satisfactory.

All of these tools should be provided in your beginner's outfit. Now let us see what each tool is for and how it shall be used.

STAMP TONGS

Stamp tongs require little instruction in use. Each of us will instinctively hold the tongs as they feel most comfortable. They are used to pick up and hold a stamp either for identification or to mount in the album. Tongs are used in place of fingers because with them it is much easier to pick up and handle a stamp and because they



Stamp tongs.

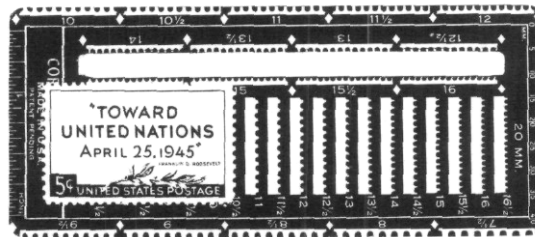
are far less likely to damage a stamp than would be the case when using fingers. At first the use of tongs may seem awkward but in almost no time at all you will find your stamp tongs the most necessary of all tools. Secure a pair that does not have too great a tension in the spring handle and use them on all occasions. Your stamp dealer will have an assortment from which you may choose a pair that feels right to you. A satisfactory pair should cost no more than twenty-five to fifty cents.

THE PERFORATION GAUGE AND MILLIMETER RULE

This is a little gadget, often printed on paper or cardboard and sometimes on metal or plastic, that makes it possible for you to tell at a glance the gauge of the per-

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foration of a stamp or to measure in millimeters the size of the stamp. There are many types available, all of which are satisfactory. The most common type is the kind that provides a series of dots or points within a given space; below each such line of dots or points the gauge of the perforation is indicated. Use the perforation-gauge part of this instrument by sliding the stamp from one row of dots or points to the other until all of the teeth, or holes of the perforations, on the stamp coincide exactly with the dots or points on the gauge (*see illustration*). Use the millimeter part of the instrument as an ordinary ruler; only measure in millimeters instead of inches.



Perforation gauge. The stamp measured has a vertical perforation of 10 1/2.

The perforation gauge provides a means of identification of the various perforations used in the manufacture of postage stamps. These perforations range from tiny pin holes, sometimes actually made by a sewing machine, to quite large round holes. But, contrary to popular belief, the diameter of the hole does not determine the gauge of the perforation. All perforations are measured against the same standard throughout the world. This standard is a distance of 20 millimeters, and the number

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of holes provided within a distance of 20 millimeters is the "count" or, as we say, the "gauge" of the perforation. Hence, if there be 10 large holes spaced closely together within a distance of 20 millimeters, the gauge would be "10." And if there were 10 very small holes within the 20-millimeter distance — spaced far apart from each other — the gauge would still be "10."

Because many stamps of identical design on identical paper have been manufactured with different gauges of perforation and because such differences are often of great importance in determining the value of a given stamp, the perforation gauge is a very important instrument. However, it is unnecessary to know or to determine the gauge of perforation of every stamp in your collection. You will find use for the gauge only when identical stamps are separated from each other — in your album or in the catalogue — because of different perforations. This happens frequently with United States stamps in the early twentieth-century issues when the Bureau of Printing and Engraving (where all United States adhesive postage stamps are now printed) was experimenting with various methods of perforation. Most all current United States postage stamps are now produced by machines that provide the standard "Perf. 11 x 10 1/2." (The horizontal top side of the stamp is always given first, followed by the right side, and then, if necessary, the bottom, when indicating compound perforations.)

For all but the specialist the trend is to ignore perforations on stamps as a means of differentiating them from each other but the practice still is strongly entrenched for United States issues. But, whatever the trend may be, the beginning collector should learn the use of

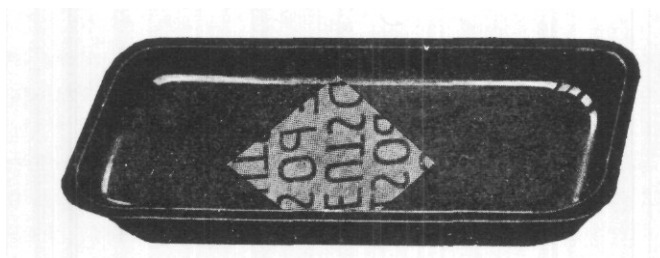
THE TOOLS YOU WILL USE

the perforation gauge for it is often a useful means of distinguishing a spurious stamp from a genuine, it is an internationally accepted standard of measurement, and it is part and parcel of stamp lore.

In another chapter we discuss the various kinds of perforations and how they are made.

THE WATERMARK DETECTOR

Primarily as a protection against counterfeiting, many stamps are printed on paper watermarked with some sort of device. All adhesive stamps of the United States were printed on watermarked paper from 1895 to 1916, and all United States embossed envelopes are on watermarked paper up to the present day.



Watermark shows against black background of a watermark tray.

A watermark is merely a thinner area in the paper, which can be seen by holding the paper before the light. A common example is an ordinary piece of "bond" paper on which may be seen, if held before a light, the manufacturer's name or trade-mark. How it gets there is explained in the chapter dealing with paper making. Before the stamps are printed thereon, the watermark can be

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easily seen by simply holding the paper in front of a light. But after the stamp has been printed it is no longer so easy to see the watermark. In fact it is often impossible to see it. Hence the watermark detector. This is a simple device usually consisting of a glass tray with a jet black bottom. To use it, place the stamp face down in the tray and pour a little carbon tetrachloride over the stamp. (Ordinary "Carbona" will do very well.) The liquid makes the paper of the stamp translucent and the black bottom of the tray will be seen through the thinner parts, *i.e.* the watermark, which is thus revealed. Carbon tetrachloride is recommended as it is noninflammable. Many collectors use ordinary benzine which serves the same purpose. Neither of these liquids will have any damaging effect upon the stamp or the gum of *most* stamps. Once the stamp has been subjected to either liquid, it should be placed on a clean piece of paper and in a few moments it will dry out completely. The liquid can be returned to the bottle for future use.

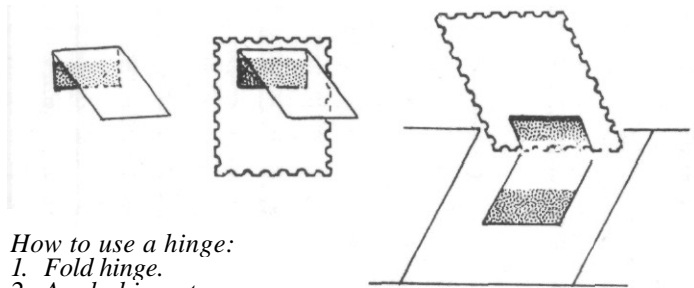
Since watermarks greatly affect the value of a given stamp, they are of the greatest importance. However, not all stamps are watermarked so it will be necessary to use the detector only on such stamps as your album or catalogue indicates may occur in the same design but with a different watermark or, perhaps, without any watermark at all.

THE STAMP HINGE

The stamp hinge is simply a small piece of thin, but tough, paper to which a special gum has been applied. Stamp hinges come in a variety of sizes and styles and are in almost universal use. They may be purchased at

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all stamp dealers and at most five-and-ten-cent stores. They usually come in packages of one thousand and range in cost from twenty to twenty-five cents. Today practically all stamp hinges are good and, if handled correctly, will not damage your stamps. When making a purchase select hinges that are described as "peelable" — that is, the gum on the hinge has the property of being able to let go if the hinge is carefully peeled from the stamp. Some hinges have this property more than others but the basic factor in making any hinge peelable is the amount of moisture it receives when you apply it to the stamp — the less moisture the better.



How to use a hinge:
1. *Fold hinge.*
2. *Apply hinge to reverse side of stamp.*
3. *Place stamp into album.*

The new hinge is flat and usually gummed on one side. It is prepared for use by folding it at about one third of its length. The short end is then moistened slightly and applied to the stamp so that the folded edge is just below the perforations at the top (or side for very tall stamps). Next the long end is moistened and with the tongs the stamp is placed in its proper position in the album. Again I caution you to use only a very small amount of moisture and *apply this moisture only to the extreme ends of*

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the hinge. If your stamp is properly mounted (as shown in the illustration) the stamp may be gently pulled toward you and then tipped up so the back may be inspected at any time.

It is not necessary, or desirable, to wet the whole hinge. Just slightly moisten the extreme ends of the hinge as shown in the illustration. The less moisture the better.

There is a type of stamp hinge that is gummed on opposite ends on opposite sides of the paper. Such hinges are not folded but are used flat. They come in dispensers and are preferred by many people.

While hinges have been the only method of mounting stamps available to the collector until recently, a new method is now known. Many collectors, especially of unused stamps, prefer a mounting that will not contact the gum on the reverse of their stamps. Three types are the most popular "*Crystal Mount*," "*Visitrays*," and "*Protective Mounts*." "*Crystal Mounts*" are long tubes of acetate with a gum strip along the top of the tube, it comes in 6 heights, the collector cuts it to suit his needs for length. It has the disadvantage of being open on both sides and stamps tend to slip out as the album pages are turned, *Visitrays* come in special sizes for the stamp, but require that the collector do the final cutting and folding of the mount. The mount has a black background and must be moistened for mounting in album. The protective mount comes completely setup, ready to use, in exact size for all U. S. stamps and many foreign stamps, it has a self sticking adhesive on it, hence is the easiest mount to use. You simply place your stamp in mount, remove protective covering from back of mount and

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place in your album space. Mounts give a striking appearance to your collection and protect your stamps from damage.



Stamp mounted in a protective mount.

The beginner, however, should mount his first stamps with the ordinary stamp hinge so as to become proficient in its use. By far the majority of collectors use the hinge even for the most expensive stamps. If you desire to remove a stamp from an album page once you have placed it in position, be sure to wait until the gum on the hinge has become thoroughly dry. *Never attempt to remove a stamp as soon as you have mounted it.* To do so would probably tear either your album page or your stamp. When dry, however, the stamp may be removed with ease.

Many advanced collectors first mount their stamps on a mat and then mount the mat in their album. This method allows the stamp to be removed as often as desired without damage for it is permanently mounted on the mat. Mats may be made from any stiff thin paper cut to the size of the stamp to be mounted.

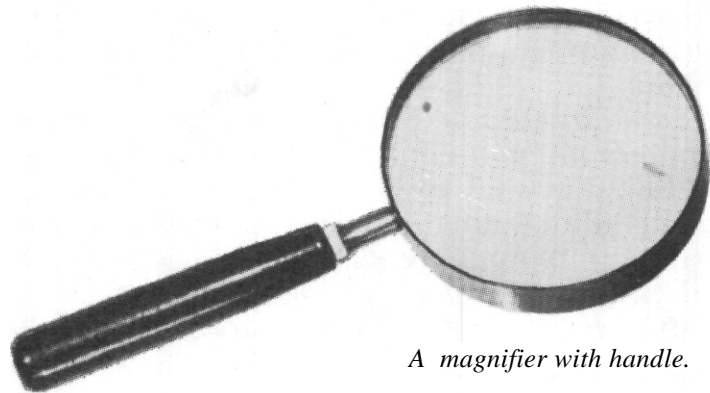
However, such tricks, while good to know and of possible use to you when you decide to build an advanced and important collection, should not be attempted at the beginning stage. Remember you are now undergoing

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your basic training. After graduation will be time to consider a serious collection, a matter discussed in a later chapter.

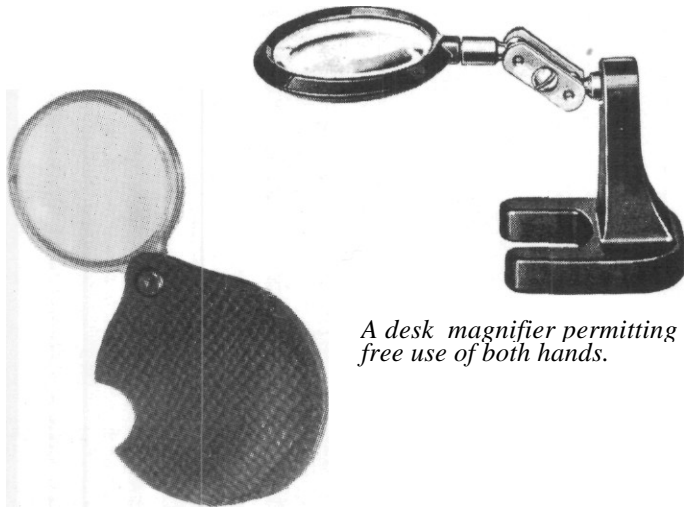
THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

This instrument is to help you see better and its proper use needs no explanation. There are innumerable varieties in all price ranges available at most stamp dealers. Many fold and may be carried in your pocket; others have straight handles; while still others have permanent mounts that stand unassisted on any flat surface. Several of the latter are provided with an electric light bulb which illuminates the subject while you examine it. In fact there is almost no limit to the complex development of these instruments. Witness the complicated machine that enlarges and projects an image of the stamp upon a viewing screen. The beginner should select a simple, inexpensive glass that will provide reasonable magnification. Your stamp dealer can advise you.



A magnifier with handle.

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*A desk magnifier permitting
free use of both hands.*

A pocket magnifier



*A battery-illuminated magnifier for close examina-
tion of detail.*

Stamp Albums



STAMP albums fall into two general categories—"printed" and "blank."

Printed albums provide spaces with illustrations and/or descriptions of each stamp that is to be placed in each space. All beginners should use a printed album and many advanced collectors continue to use them throughout their entire collecting life. They are used by far more collectors than any other type of album. They come in many styles to suit various purposes. Let us examine them in detail.

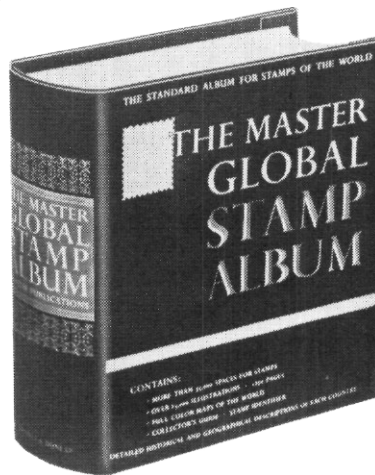
Generally speaking, all printed albums fall into three groups.

1. Albums at least possible cost for the very young. Such are little more than toys, to be used for a brief period and discarded.
2. Albums carefully designed and laid out to provide spaces for the maximum number of stamps the new or casual collector is likely to obtain. These albums vary in size according to the number of stamps they can hold and, of course, vary in price in accordance with their completeness.

STAMP ALBUMS

3. Unabridged albums which provide spaces for all stamps of a single country, group of countries, or kind of stamp. Such albums are usually printed on one side of the page and are loose-leaf. They are expensive and often bulky, occasionally requiring several volumes to take care of a single group of stamps. They are the albums you will grow up to when you start to specialize.

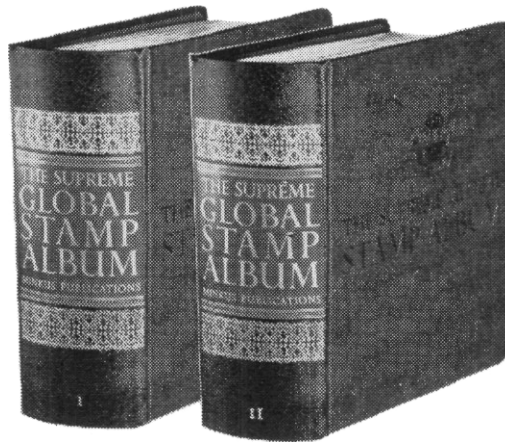
The albums that will interest most collectors will be those noted under Group 2—albums that provide the maximum number of spaces for the stamps of the world. Inasmuch as there are well over one hundred thousand different stamps issued by the nations of the world it will be obvious that all of these albums are abridged in more or less degree. The largest single-volume edition of such an album is the *Master Global Stamp Album* published by Minkus Publications. This book is loose-



The Master Global Album with spaces for almost 56,000 stamps and more than 30,000 illustrations at the time of its publication. Yearly supplements are issued to keep the album up to date.

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leaf and contains spaces for over fifty-six thousand different stamps, about half of all that have ever been issued. It is, in all respects, the largest and best single volume that has yet been published and is the maximum value obtainable for anyone desiring to collect the stamps of the world. To all intents and purposes, this album will serve the collector a lifetime. This is especially true as the publisher provides supplements each year for the newly issued stamps.

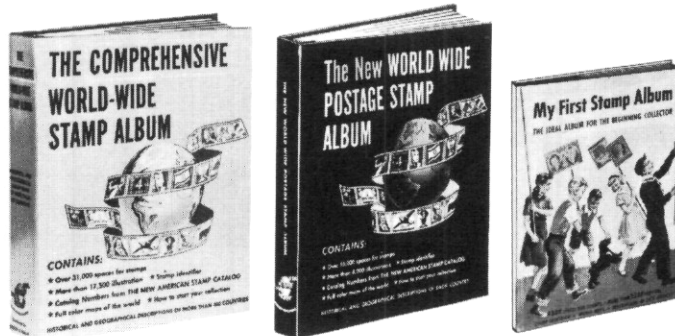


The Supreme Global Stamp Album in two volumes contains spaces for over 90,000 stamps with more than 50,000 illustrations including numerous reproductions of perforations, exact design sizes, enlarged design details and watermarks. Yearly supplements are available to keep the album up to date.

The Master Global Stamp Album proved to be such a great success that the publishers decided to expand this great work in order to provide the discriminate collector with an even more complete album. They have, therefore, created *The Supreme Global Stamp Album* in two vol-

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umes, designed to house a collection of over 90,000 stamps of the world. This album is expandable. Collectors will be able to add yearly supplements as well as blank pages for additional varieties or special items. A slip-container is provided to protect the album.



Various classes of printed albums:

The Comprehensive World-Wide Album, a medium size loose-leaf album for more than 30,000 stamps and 17,000 illustrations.

The New World-Wide Album, a popular loose-leaf album for beginners with spaces for over 15,000 stamps and 7,150 illustrations.

My First Stamp Album, a bound album for young beginners with spaces for over 4,300 and 2,500 illustrations.

But not every collector will desire to undertake such a large album, especially when just beginning his philatelic career. There are many other very fine printed albums which provide spaces for stamps of the world but are abridged to a greater degree than are the *Supreme Global* or the *Master Global Stamp Albums*. The variety of such albums is so great that it would be well to examine just what the beginner, or anyone for that matter, should look for in making a selection.

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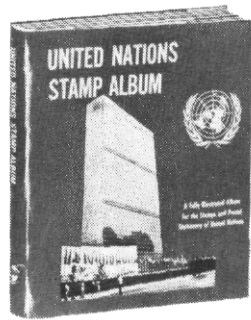
First, the album should be loose-leaf. For albums which are printed on both sides of the page (as most all are) this feature may not be readily understood. Whether or not supplements are to be issued for such albums, the loose-leaf feature allows you to do several things not possible with the bound book. First, it allows you to insert blank pages wherever you wish to take care of newly issued stamps or of stamps you may acquire for which no spaces have been provided in the album. This is a very important feature for without it your album is out of date the minute you acquire it. Second, it allows you to acquire new binders when your album grows too big, so you may expand your album to suit your collecting activities. Third, it allows you properly to insert interleaving between the pages of your album—a desirable attribute especially for albums printed on both sides of the page. The interleaving will keep the stamps on opposite pages from locking together and, thus, from tearing when you turn the pages. Fourth, it allows you to remove sections of the album for display, exhibiting, or rearrangement according to your own desires.

By all means, whatever album you select be sure that it is loose-leaf.

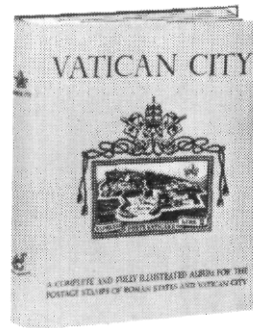
If you are a beginner, allow your dealer to recommend the album best suited to your purpose. Study the albums he shows you and select the best you can afford. Even stretch a point here and afford a better album than you may at first have cared to undertake. Remember that this first album will stay with you a long while and that it can "make or break" the pleasure you receive from the hobby. If you know nothing about the hobby, it would be better to obtain a lower-priced album with the purpose

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in mind that this book is only to give you the feel of the game — the know-how — and that you will soon discard it for a better album. Still, if such is your purpose — and it is a very good purpose indeed for the beginner — do not waste your money on an outright toy. Let the dealer help, and buy an album that will be able to help you acquire the know-how.



United Nations Album



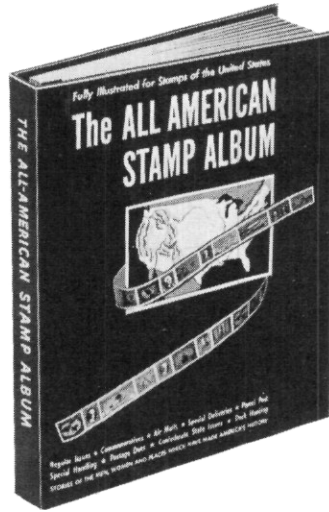
Vatican City Album

These two outstanding albums are examples of the albums that provide spaces for all the stamps of one country. From the Minkus Publications line of three-ring binder albums that include such countries as Israel & Switzerland. These albums feature the stories behind the stamps and annual supplements.

Printed albums also include many that are especially designed to provide spaces for one kind of stamp or for the stamps of one country. Thus, you may acquire a printed album that will provide spaces for airmail stamps only, for Roosevelt Stamps, or for some special series of stamps like the Famous American Series issued by the United States, the United Nations stamps, Vatican City stamps, etc. When the subject which the album covers is complete and nothing more will ever be added to it, the loose-leaf factor is not necessary or so desirable.

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There are many of these special albums that cover a wide variety of purposes. For instance, you may acquire albums that provide spaces for blocks of four of United States commemorative stamps, or other albums that provide for plate number blocks of the same. In fact you may acquire a printed album to suit almost any purpose you have in mind.

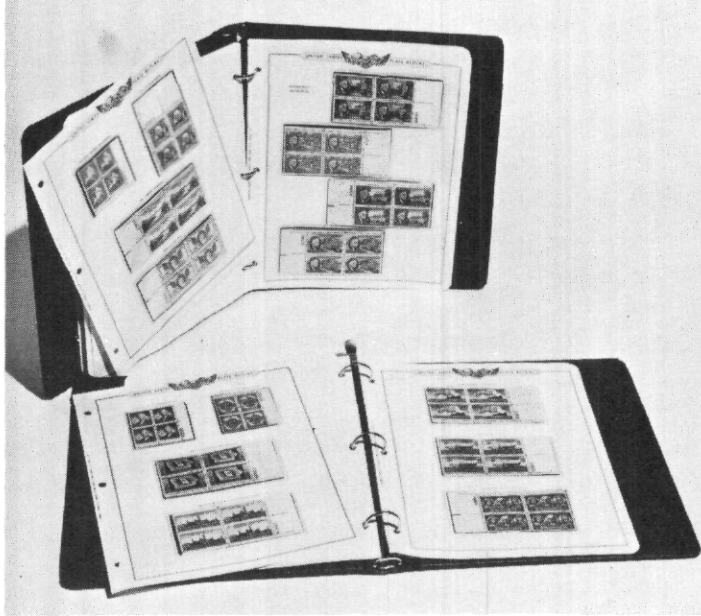


The All American Stamp Album. An outstanding album for the stamps of the United States. Interesting annotations appear on each page describing the particular issue. Printed on one side of the page. Annual supplements are available.

Still other albums in this group would be those that provide spaces for the stamps of a single country or group of countries. Such albums cover the world beginning with volumes for United States Stamps only, for stamps of the British Empire, for Stamps of France and Colonies, Germany and Colonies, etc., etc. As a rule

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these "specialized" albums are printed on one side of the page only and are in every way the very finest and most "adult" printed albums obtainable. They range in cost from about \$2.95 for the smallest group of stamps covered to about \$25.00 for the largest groups.



The American Plate Block Album.

As a matter of interest and to indicate the large selection of albums available we append at the end of this chapter a list of printed albums produced by the leading publishers.

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BLANK ALBUMS

Blank albums are the deluxe albums of philately. They are always loose-leaf and often have pages provided with linen hinges to facilitate their opening and to make them lie flat when the book is open.

As the name implies, the pages of blank albums have no printing other than, usually, a very faint *quadrille* background to assist you in aligning your stamps.

Such albums are used by advanced collectors and by all others who do not wish to be controlled by printed spaces for stamps.

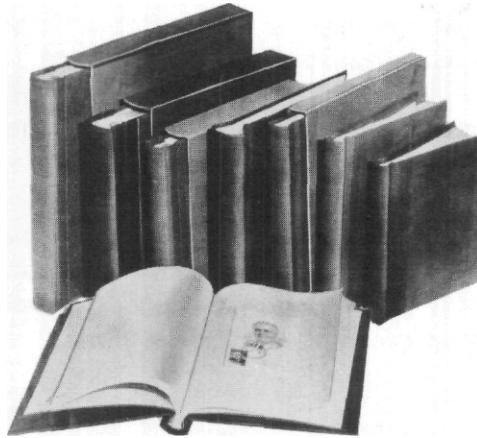
They are available in all qualities and sizes from a few dollars to twenty-five dollars or even more for a single volume.

Things to look for in acquiring a blank album are the quality of the paper used for the pages. This should be strong, preferably of linen content; it should present a smooth but not glossy surface; and you should be able to write with pen and ink on the page without fear of blotting.

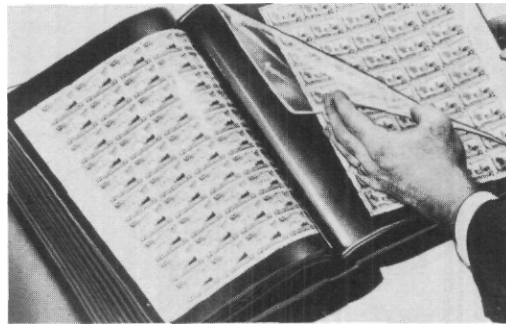
STOCK BOOKS

These are albums with pages made up of a series of pockets—like an approval card—in which to keep stamps. They are useful to the collector principally as a place to keep duplicates or stamps that are awaiting his pleasure to be mounted in his collection. They come in an enormous variety of styles, sizes, and qualities. The very largest are used by dealers in which to keep their stock. The very smallest are simply one-page wallets called "pocket stock books" — handy things in which to carry around loose stamps.

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Blank albums.



A de luxe sheet album. Sheets of stamps are kept in clear acetate pockets.

SPECIAL ALBUMS

In addition to the ordinary albums and stock books mentioned, there are various albums designed for a special purpose. Such albums include those called "Mint Sheet albums" — a portfolio-style folder in which full

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sheets of stamps may be safely stored. Other special albums would be the so-called "cover albums." These are a series of transparent envelopes into which a single "cover" may be inserted. By turning the transparent pocket, you may study either side of the cover without ever taking it out of its container. Such albums are sometimes merely a series of strong transparent pockets fastened in a ring binder. Others have the pockets arranged so that they slightly overlap each other, revealing part of the cover in each pocket.

WHERE TO BUY AN ALBUM

It would not be fair nor in the best interests of the purpose of this book to recommend a specific place where you can purchase a stamp album. Not all stamp dealers carry albums in stock and not all who do stock albums carry all that are published. Before purchasing any album it would be well to consult the advertisements of dealers who sell them. Such advertisements may be found in the various philatelic magazines and in the stamp pages of newspapers in the larger cities. Most dealers handling albums also provide descriptive price lists of what they have available. By reading these, you will be able to gather a definite idea of what you wish and you may then visit a dealer where you have opportunity to examine the albums you have read about. If you live in the country far away from any stamp store, the price lists we have mentioned will be your best bet in making a selection. If you live near a city you can personally examine the albums. And, of course, your friends who are collectors will have albums you can examine and they can help

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you in making your selection. It should not be difficult for anyone, anywhere, to acquire a first-class stamp album as they are available in almost every book store or department store in every town or city in the country.

LIST OF PRINTED STAMP ALBUMS

The following list of printed albums presently available to collectors is by no means intended to be complete. There are many albums published in foreign countries which are available in the United States. Also, there are many printed stamp albums published by specialty dealers to provide for the stamps in which they specialized. There are many other general albums published by others than those mentioned which have much to recommend them. Some stamp dealers, and especially stamp departments of Department Stores, make an effort to carry the publications of several manufacturers. The author has personal knowledge of the publications mentioned and can recommend them without reservation. All have features of definite interest and value to the ultimate user. Like automobiles all are good and one may appeal to an individual as better suited to his specific needs than the other.

MINKUS PUBLICATIONS ALBUMS

THE MINKUS ORGANIZATION began publishing albums about 1945. Basing their ideas on the demands of thousands of collectors who annually visited the Minkus-operated stamp departments in famous department stores throughout the country, the Minkus albums have gained wide popularity. These albums now outsell all similar

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albums on the market. Annual supplements for the larger world-wide albums, as well as all special country albums are published annually. The publishers take special pride in this fact.

WORLD-WIDE ALBUMS

SUPREME GLOBAL ALBUM: Looseleaf.

Features: Spaces for over 93,000 stamps, over 60,000 clear illustrations, perforation and design varieties indicated by special enlarged illustrations, blank pages, glassine or acetate interleaving available. Most complete World Wide album of its kind, complete in 2 volumes with special slip container, priced at less than \$40.00, 2 post binders with steel reinforced backs. Annual supplements.

MASTER GLOBAL ALBUM: Looseleaf.

Features: Spaces for over 56,000 stamps, over 30,000 illustrations, special enlarged illustrations of design varieties and watermarks, most complete one volume world wide album, 2 post steel reinforced back binder priced at less than \$20.00. Blank pages, glassine or acetate interleaving available. Annual supplements.

COMPREHENSIVE WORLD WIDE ALBUM: Looseleaf, maps in full color, stamp identifier.

Features: Spaces for over 31,000 stamps, more than 17,000 clear illustrations, U. S. section allows for watermark and perforation varieties. Priced at less

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than \$10.00. Blank pages and interleaving available. In 2 post binder. The Global Albums supplements fit this album as well.

NEW WORLD WIDE STAMP ALBUM: Recommended for the beginner.

Features: Spaces for more than 16,000 stamps, over 8,000 clear illustrations, the 2 post looseleaf edition is priced at about \$5.00, stamp identifier, full color maps, many other features. Blank pages and interleaving available. Bound edition priced at less than \$4.00. The supplements issued annually for Global albums will also fit the World Wide.

ALL AMERICAN ALBUM:

Features: Spaces for United States Albums commemorative and regular issue stamps, airmail, special deliveries, postage dues, and many other types. Every space illustrated, catalog number from New American Stamp Catalog in each space. Stories behind the stamp, looseleaf, annual supplements, 2 post binder, priced at less than \$5.00.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP ALBUM:

Features: Spaces for every United States Commemorative stamp, on ledger stock in 3 ring binder, every space illustrated, each space with catalog number from New American Stamp Catalog. Stories behind the stamp. Annual Supplements are available. Priced at less than \$6.00.

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REGULAR ISSUES ALBUM:

Features: Spaces for regular United States stamps plus airmail, postage due, special delivery, ducks, Confederate States, etc. Each space illustrated and catalog number from New American Stamp Catalog included. Priced at \$5.00.



PLATE BLOCK ALBUMS:

Features: A series of 4 albums for the Plate Blocks of United States stamps, fully illustrated, stories behind the stamps, in three ring binders, on ledger stock, numbers from the New American Stamp Catalog in each space, annual supplements.
VOL. I—1919-1937 Commemorative issues priced at \$4.00.
VOL. II—1938-1950 Commemorative and regular issues, priced at \$4.00.
VOL. III—1951 to date—Commemorative and regular issues priced at less than \$5.00.
Airmails 1918 to date—priced at \$3.50.

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COMPLETE COUNTRY ALBUMS: (With historical descriptions—in 3 ring binders.)

Features: Israel, Vatican City, Switzerland, Cambodia, Laos, Viet-Nam, United Nations, Ireland, Canada, World Refugee and Ghana have already appeared in this series, many others will follow. Printed on ledger stock, in three ring binders, these albums are fully illustrated, and have a space for every major variety of the country listed in the Minkus New World Wide Stamp Catalog and in addition the World Wide Catalog number is indicated in each space. The stories behind the stamps are included in each album. The albums are priced from \$3.50 to \$6.00 each. Annual Supplements available.

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COMPLETE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY ALBUMS: (In 2 post binders.)

The Minkus series of "single country" albums, introduced within the last couple of years has been expanded so that it is now possible to acquire a "single country" album for almost all of the major nations of the world. These albums furnish spaces for every major listing in the Minkus "World Wide Postage Stamp Catalog" as described in the following chapter. The albums are loose-leaf and the pages are printed on one side of the page only. They are profusely illustrated and each space provides a description of the stamp together with the proper Minkus catalog number. Annual supplements are issued to keep the albums up to date. The tremendous popularity of these albums has in-

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duced the publishers to continually expand the series which eventually will run to as many as fifty different albums. Presently available are albums for *Austria*, *Belgium & Colonies*, *British Africa*, *British America*, *British Asia*, *British Europe*, *British Oceania*; *Colombia*, *Panama*, & *Canal Zone*, *Czechoslovakia*, *France*, *French Colonies* (2 volumes), *Germany*, *Greece*. Also *Independent Nations of Africa*, *Italy*, *Italian Colonies*, *Japan*, *Luxembourg*, *Monaco-Andorra*, *Netherlands & Colonies*, *Poland*, *Portugal & Colonies*, *Scandinavia & Baltic Countries*, *Tunisia*, *Libya & Morocco*, *Turkey* and *Yugoslavia*.

Still others are in the making. The albums vary in price according to the number of pages involved prices ranging from as little as \$4 to \$11 per volume.

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SCOTT PUBLICATIONS

United States Albums (all 2 post binders)

NATIONAL ALBUM: One space for each U. S. stamp listed in Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, illustrated, catalog number in each space. Yearly supplements. This book contains spaces for U. S. embossed envelope stamps and U. S. revenue stamps, priced about \$12.00.

AMERICAN ALBUM: Spaces for U. S. stamps, including revenues and embossed envelopes, yearly supplements, illustrated Scott catalogue numbers in each space. Priced about \$5.00 (is condensed version of National Album).

WORLD WIDE ALBUMS

INTERNATIONAL ALBUM:

Three Volumes: Vol. I-1840-1940

Vol. II- 1941-1949

Vol. III- 1949-1955

Vol. IV- 1956-1960

Spaces for about 75,000 stamps (in all four volumes),
Scott Catalogue numbers only in United States section.

SPECIALTY SERIES: This is a series of loose-leaf albums, printed on one side of the page only providing spaces for the world's postage stamps as listed in Scott's Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. The Albums are sold in units each embracing a group of related coun-

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tries. The entire series of Scott Specialty Albums consists of 24 titles. The layout of pages, and general production is excellent.

WASHINGTON PRESS PUBLICATIONS: White Ace line of albums and pages.

A group of pages featuring colorful headings and borders on heavy paper punched for standard three ring binders. Special binders available for the various sets of pages for which annual supplements are issued. In addition to the colorful heads and borders the pages provide historical notes for each stamp or set of stamps. The series comprises United States commemorative stamps in singles, blocks of 4 and plate number blocks. U. S. regular issues as well as albums for special groups of stamps including, U. S. Presidential series, airmails, "Duck Stamps", Champions of Liberty, George VI Coronation, British Peace and Victory issues, Queen Elizabeth II, Royal Tour, Canada, Europa, Ghana, Ireland, United Nations, Ryukyus, Vatican City, Israel, etc. A very popular series of albums designed for those who desire illuminated pages to set off their stamps.



Stamp Catalogs

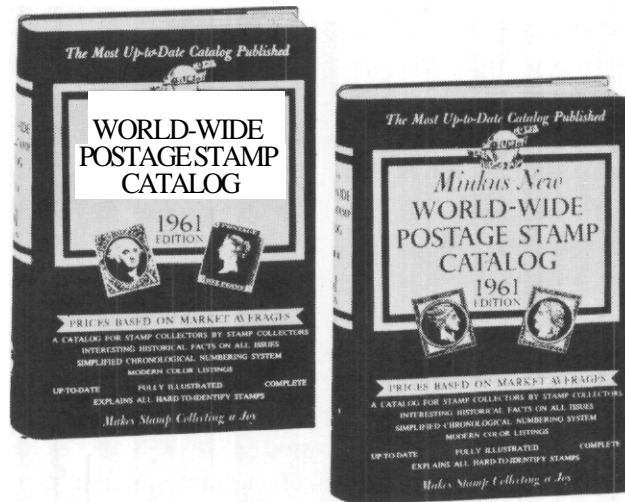
STAMP CATALOGS are just about the most useful and necessary tool of the hobby. Indeed, were it not for these important publications, the hobby would amount to very little. If you did not procure a stamp catalog with your initial outfit you will certainly need one very soon, for the entire stamp world revolves around these important books. Albums are patterned after them; all stamp dealer advertisements refer to them; all philatelic magazines, all philatelic writers and authorities base their articles and studies upon them. Further, the catalog prices for stamps are the basis on which stamps are bought, sold and exchanged throughout the world.

Stamp catalogs are divided into two principal groups:
1) General Catalogs, which list, illustrate, describe and give evaluations for all postage stamps of the world, and

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2) Specialized Catalogs, which give greatly expanded listing of the stamps of a single country or a particular group of stamps.

In the United States there are presently two general catalogs of the world's postage stamps: "Minkus New World-Wide Postage Stamp Catalog," published by Minkus Publications, Inc., and Scott's "Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue," published by Scott Publications, Inc. Both firms are located in New York City. Though both are general catalogs, "Minkus New World Wide Catalog" is the more complete, more fully illustrated and



informative.

The Minkus "integrated" system lists all stamps, of whatever category, strictly in the chronological order of issue. No prefix letters are needed except R used to indicate Revenues available for postage, N to indicate stamps not officially available, etc. Thus, if the first stamp issued by any country was a regular postage stamp, it

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would be Minkus number 1. If the second stamp was issued as a *semi-postal* stamp, it would be Minkus number 2, and so on. Appropriate headings keep the collector informed of the proper category of the stamp listed.

With the Minkus "integrated" system of listing, the great advantage to the collector is that once having discovered the picture of his stamp in the catalog, all of the information he needs is supplied by the catalog itself, which dutifully tells him whether the stamp in question be "regular postage," "airmail," or any other category.

The method of using any general catalog of the world's stamps remains the same. The most helpful feature of any such catalog are the pictures. To locate any given stamp, one opens the catalog to the country which issues the stamp and then searches the pages until he finds a picture of the stamp he is trying to identify. Many stamps will have the dates of issue incorporated somewhere within their design. Such dates are very helpful in allowing you to turn to the pages of the catalog listing the stamps of that particular year. Still other matters of help will be the picture upon the stamps. For instance, if a stamp pictures the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, one would not look for such a stamp to have been issued prior to his becoming President of the United States. Most obviously, it would have to have been issued at a later date. Pictures of monuments, engineering marvels, etc., will, by their very nature, give similar clues to the general period of their issue.

The catalogs themselves will give a great deal of help in their introductory pages, and anyone who uses a catalog is urged to first consult these pages before attempting to look up any particular stamp.

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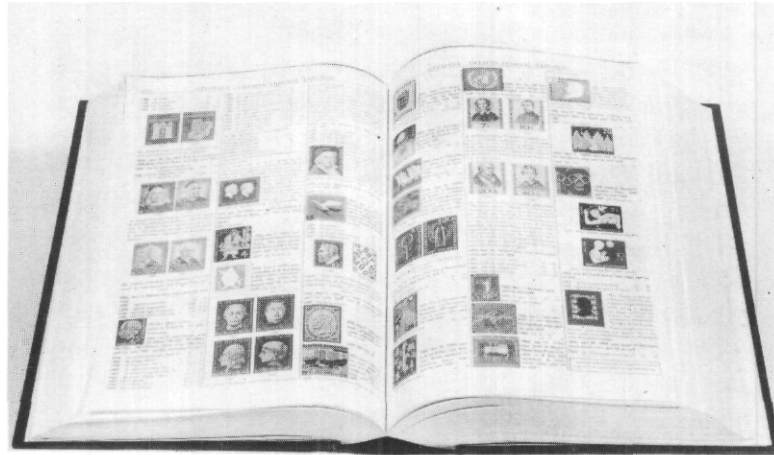
Minkus World Wide Catalog gives extensive background data on the personages and designs on each stamp. Enlarging portions of the stamps are used copiously to show important differences between similar appearing stamps. The illustrated pages from the Minkus Catalog on pages of this book will make the importance of these features clear to any collector.

The Scott "segregated" system consists of grouping the stamps according to their various categories. Thus, for any one country, all regular postage stamps are grouped and are listed in chronological order of their issue beginning with the first issue as number 1. This group is followed by semi-postals, then by listings of all of the airmail stamps beginning again with the first issue as number 1. To identify these two "number 1's" from each other, a prefix letter is added to each group other than the regular postage issues. Thus, in the Scott Catalogue number "C1" would indicate an airmail stamp, number "J1" would indicate a postage due stamp. Various other prefix letters are used to identify various other categories of stamps.

With Scott's "segregated" system the collector who limits his interests to only airmail stamps may find the listing of these without the bother of searching them out. However, there are few collectors limiting their interests to any of the other segregated groups. The fellow who limits his interest to regular postage issues almost always includes airmail stamps, for these are, in his opinion, at least, "regular" issues. That is, they are not semi-postal, postage due, or other service issues. Their function is to pay postage. For this collector, who is by far in the majority of all collectors, the Scott "segregated"

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system requires him to look in at least two places of each country for the stamps he collects. Still another disadvantage lies in the fact that any person using Scott Catalogues must know before he consults the catalogue into just which category the stamp before him falls.



Minkus New World-Wide Stamp Catalog

When the Minkus Catalog first appeared, some of the older, more conservative collectors showed reluctance to change to a new, up-to-date catalog. However, after seeing the many better features of the new Minkus Catalog, many have already been won over. In this writer's opinion, the Minkus "integrated" system of listing stamps is the most logical and sensible method and will, in due course, predominate. In the few years the "Minkus New World-Wide Catalog" has been published it has had very wide acceptance and each annual edition exceeds the quantity produced for each preceding edition.

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Minkus New World Wide Catalog strives to interest the collector with many informative and interesting facts about the stamps and the nations that issue them. On the other hand, the Scott Catalogue continues its long tradition of brief captions. Of the two publications, one is likely to find the newer, Minkus publication more lively and definitely more rewarding.

A feature of the Minkus New World-Wide Postage Stamp Catalog is the series of the Regional Catalogs available from \$1.00 - \$3.00 each. Minkus Regional Catalogs are sections of the larger Minkus New World-Wide Postage Stamp Catalog covering various related groups of stamps. They are bound in paper covers and are extremely popular with collectors specializing in stamps of individual countries or groups of countries.

In addition to the general catalogs we have mentioned, both Minkus and Scott publish special catalogs having expanded listings of United States stamps only. Again, the Scott publication is the older. However, the "Minkus New American" catalog will prove to be the livelier of the two and, in fact, is a book that one may actually sit down and read with pleasure, as he would an entertaining novel.

Whether you chose a Minkus or Scott catalog, or for that matter, any of the catalogs mentioned in this chapter, you may use the numbers provided in them to order stamps from any dealer anywhere in the world. Merely indicate to the dealer the catalog you are using and submit to him the list of numbers of the stamps wanted.

We have written at considerable length about the general catalogs of the stamps of the world and have neglected the second group of catalogs—the "special-

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Minkus New American Stamp Catalog

ized" catalogs. This is because the whole effort of this book is to introduce the tyro to stamp collecting and start him, or her, off on the right foot. Suffice it to say that there are specialized catalogs available for almost any group of stamps one might care to name. All of these are excellent, some quite marvelous productions. You will become acquainted with them as your collection advances.

In Europe there are three leading world wide catalogs. In England "Gibbons," published by Stanley Gibbons, Ltd. of London. This catalog is standard in England and used generally throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations. The stamps are priced in pounds, pence and shillings. In France "Yvert & Tellier" published by House of Champion, Paris, is standard and is referred to throughout the nations under French influence as well as most Latin American countries. The stamps are priced

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in francs. In Germany the "Michel" Catalog reigns supreme and, of course, is in general use wherever the German influence predominates. Stamps in it are priced in German marks. There are also fine catalogs issued in Switzerland (Zumstein), Italy, Spain and most of the larger European countries.

"Why should I bother looking my stamps up in the catalog when all I have to do is find the proper place for them in my album?" A good question but one which has an equally good answer.

Every stamp issued by any government at any time anywhere in the world has been identified in one or another of the stamp catalogs of the world and has been assigned a number.

This feature of stamp catalogs, more than anything else connected with stamp collecting, has made the hobby international and universal in scope. By mentioning the name of the catalog, the country that issued the stamp, and the number of the stamp, you may describe or order any stamp you wish from any place in the world.

CATALOG PRICES, WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

The prices given in stamp catalogs are intended merely to be guides to values. For stamps in great popularity the "catalog price" is likely to lag far behind the actual market value — the price at which dealers sell stamps. The reason for this is obvious for, since stamp catalogs are published only at annual intervals, they can not keep up with a very active market. On the other hand, for stamps that do not enjoy great popularity at

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the moment, the catalog price may be considerably higher than that at which you purchase the stamps in question. It is, in fact, impossible for any catalog to give you the exact price you may pay for any stamp. Thus catalog prices are merely guides to value. They inform you that, at the time of their publication and in the opinion of competent judges, the stamps listed are priced at what seemed to be a fair and true estimate of their valuation.

Every beginner, upon his first reference to a stamp catalog, will discover that no stamp is valued at less than two cents. Here, again, we have what appears to be a misleading situation. Every beginner knows full well that he can buy a packet of a thousand different stamps for as little as two dollars — perhaps even for less. According to the catalog price, a thousand different stamps of the very lowest price would be worth twenty dollars! *And it most certainly would cost you twenty dollars if you were to submit a list of one thousand stamps to a dealer and ask him to pick them out of stock.* It would take an experienced clerk all day to perform such a chore!

The catalog price of two cents is a retail quotation for an individual stamp. In fact, all quotations given in any catalog are *retail* quotations, *i.e.* the price at which you might expect to purchase any given stamp. No catalog can, or does, attempt to indicate how much you might get for your stamps when, and if, you undertake to sell them.

However, by ascertaining the catalog value of your collection, taking into consideration the situation regarding these cheap stamps, and the condition of your more valuable stamps, you may arrive at a general idea of what your collection should be worth in the event you wish to

STAMP CATALOGS

sell it. Bear in mind that if sold to a dealer you must take into consideration the profit he will have to make in order to handle your collection.

Catalog prices also perform another very valuable function for the collector. They furnish a basis on which stamps may be traded. It would be obviously unfair to trade a five-cent first issue of the United States for a recent stamp of, say, France. But we might well consummate a trade of our five-cent U.S. for a quantity of recent stamps of France that would have catalog value equal to our own stamp. We could effect such a trade "catalog for catalog" or demand a greater catalog value for our stamp. Whatever might be agreed upon, the trade becomes possible on a basis of catalog value. Such a trade might be effected between collectors or between collector and dealer residing at opposite ends of the earth. These things are made possible only because of the catalog, a very valuable book indeed to any collector. See that you acquire one early in your collecting activity. It might well be a part of your beginner's outfit.

How to Acquire Stamps

TIME was when many a great collection was started by an embryo collector visiting the attic and discovering an old trunk full of letters with stamps attached. In fact, many of our greatest rarities were discovered in just that way — and many others were ruined through ignorance of what had been discovered!

The old trunk and the wastebasket have pretty well been explored and, while an occasional find is still made in such places, they no longer offer an acceptable means of building a stamp collection.

The office mail, if you can latch onto it, is still very good for turning up new stamps especially if your employers do an international business. But even such correspondence is seldom available to the tyro. Usually the office mail is turned over to the office stamp club and divided up among all its members.

The windfall of someone giving you an old collection, "which uncle had when he was a boy," doesn't happen very often.

HOW TO ACQUIRE STAMPS

All these things are additional ways of adding to your collection but by far your greatest source of supply for stamps is the stamp dealer. This being the case it would be intelligent to know how to buy stamps.

Stamps are sold by dealers in mixtures, packets, sets, and in single specimens. The individual cost of the stamps you acquire increases exactly in respect to the order in which we have listed them: from the lowest-cost to the highest-priced single specimens.

"Ho! Ho!" you say. "I'll buy all my stamps in mixtures and save money!"

Take it easy, friend, and let us study this thing out. Let's find out just what we will be getting for our money.

Now take mixtures. These are an accumulation of stamps, either on or off paper as may be described, which are put up into large envelopes, cloth bags, or boxes. They are quite often sold by weight. A pound of stamps on pieces of paper may run to as many as four thousand stamps. Off paper a pound would run to considerably more. But just as the name implies, a mixture is a lot of stamps of nondescript determination, many, even most, of which will be duplicates of each other. As a general rule mixtures contain only the commonest of stamps — the kind you and I receive daily in the mail. Now it is completely possible, albeit highly improbable, that you may find a very valuable stamp in a mixture. I know one instance where this actually did happen some years ago. A youngster bought one of those twenty-five-cent mixtures that were popular at the time, and in it he discovered a two-cent Pan-American 'invert'— which he sold for well over one thousand dollars! This, so far as I know is the only such instance on record. However, it is not

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unusual for you to find many desirable stamps in mixtures and for a lot of fun, with the chance of finding some additions for your collection, the mixture is the best buy for your money.

The beginner, however, should turn his attention to packets. These contain *all different* stamps; there are no two alike.

"All different" packets represent the form in which stamps may be acquired at the lowest possible cost to the collector.

There are three general kinds: packets of all different stamps of the world; all different from a single continent or group of nations; and all different of any one country.

Unless otherwise described, packets will duplicate the stamps of other packets in the same group.

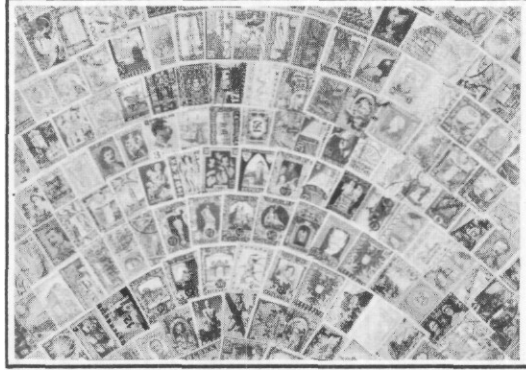
Thus, a packet of two thousand all-different stamps of the world would be very likely to contain all of the stamps, or a great proportion of those, that were contained in a packet of a thousand different stamps of the world.

With so many stamps available it is comparatively easy to make up a packet of one thousand different stamps of the world. There are a great many very low-priced stamps that may be included in such a packet and, hence, such a packet may be sold at a very low price. It's like buying wholesale. If you request just one stamp, the very lowest priced, it would, in all likelihood, cost you two cents. But if you purchase a thousand different stamps put up in a packet, the cost would be less than three dollars.

It gets a little harder to make up a packet of two thousand different, it is even harder to make up one of five

HOW TO ACQUIRE STAMPS

thousand different, and it begins to become really difficult to make up ten thousand different. With each increase in the number of stamps that are included, better-grade stamps are required and the cost increases.



A packet with a fine collection of 10,000 different postage stamps of the entire world.

You can not expect, nor will you be able to acquire, a packet of ten thousand different stamps for just ten times the cost of a thousand different stamps.

The intelligent way to progress through any list of packets is as follows:

1. Buy all different of the world first.
2. Supplement this with all different of the continents.
3. Supplement this with all different of a single country.
4. Always buy the largest packet that you can afford in any particular group.

You will, of course, find considerable duplication with this method but you will hold such duplication down to a minimum and you will have added a maximum number of stamps to your collection at a minimum cost.

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Having exhausted the possibilities of all-different packets your next advance is to purchase stamps in "sets." Sets are stamps of a single issue put up to sell as a unit. They may be "complete" — every stamp that was issued of a given series; or they may be "short sets" — just some of the stamps of the series. Because sets involve



A packet with stamps of Iceland.

some of the principles of mass production in that you are buying all at one time many stamps which have been prepared into merchandisable units, they offer a low-cost method of adding to your collection. The possibilities of acquiring sets of stamps will never be exhausted, so this is one of the most satisfactory methods of acquiring stamps of any description.

But even having progressed exactly as outlined — which, of course, no one will ever do — there will be blank spaces in your album which you will wish to fill. From now on, you will have to acquire the stamps you wish as single specimens. There are two methods open to you.

1. Visit a stamp store and select individual stamps from the stock books or from stamps that may be on display.

HOW TO ACQUIRE STAMPS



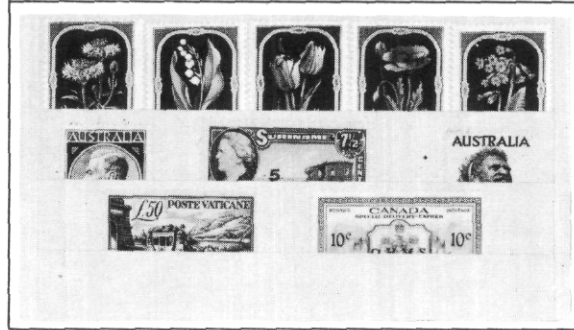
The first issue of the Kingdom of Laos. A stamp issuing country since 1951, the Kingdom was formerly part of French Indo-China.

2. Submit a "want list" of stamps you wish. The dealer will then select copies from his stock, mount them on an approval card and indicate the price for each stamp.

All dealers submit stamps against want lists through the mail. This is done either on approval, against a charge account, or on direct order. "On approval" or against a charge account means that you have previously established credit with the dealer and the stamps are sent to you on open credit according to whatever terms have been established. "Direct order" is a case where you send your money along with your order for certain stamps. All stamp dealers are well used to doing business by mail and will issue credit slips or make prompt refunds for any stamps you have ordered that may be out of stock.

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Many collectors, and especially beginners, simply request the dealer to send "approvals." In such cases the dealer will send selections of stamps he has available at regular intervals until such time as you request him to cease. You make whatever selections you wish from the stamps that are sent and return the balance together with your remittance for those you have retained. Very few



Stamps sent on approval.

dealers will send you approvals unless you have asked for them. Actually approvals are consignments and remain the property of the dealer sending them until such time as you either return or pay for them. The responsibility of returning them in good order and promptly in accordance with the stated terms, rests upon you, and this responsibility should not be taken lightly. Remember, you have requested the stamps, the dealer has accepted you as a responsible "credit risk," so do not destroy this credit. As you go along it will become one of your most valuable assets.

HOW TO ACQUIRE STAMPS

REMOVING STAMPS FROM PAPER

The most practical method of removing stamps from paper is to soak them in cold water. Merely place a quantity of stuck down stamps in a pan of water and allow to stand long enough to dissolve the gum. When the stamps begin to float free of the paper, separate the stamps from the paper, place the stamps face down on some spread-out newspaper and allow to dry.

Any stamps that may have become creased or wrinkled can be wetted again separately and pressed flat between blotters. Place some heavy books on the blotters so that enough pressure will be exerted on the stamps to remove the wrinkles.

While most stamps are not affected by even prolonged immersion in water, there are a few which have soluble colors which would tend to strain the other stamps being soaked. For that reason it is advisable not to soak too many stamps at one time.

CAUTION

Certain stamps may not be subjected to the rude process noted in the foregoing. Among these would be certain British and British colony stamps that have been printed on "chalky surface" paper — in other words coated paper such as is commonly used for "slick" paper magazines. If the surface of the paper appears "glossy" it should not be soaked in water. To make sure mark the edge of the stamp with an ordinary ten cent piece (any real silver will do). If the paper is "chalky surface" the edge of the dime will leave a black mark.

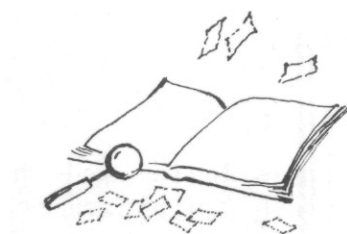
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Certain other stamps are printed in fugitive colors and will "run" if soaked in water. Some early U. S. postage due stamps are so affected. If you note the water in which you have placed your stamps begins to take color examine the lot and discover just which stamps are leaching color. Remove them.

STAMPS OF HIGH VALUE


By and large the soaking process described in the foregoing will not hurt even the most valuable stamp. Just make sure it is not printed in fugitive ink or on chalky surface paper.

If you have doubts or are timid about "taking a chance" there are various gadgets for removing individual stamps from paper. They are available from most all dealers and come in a variety of trade names.



CHAPTER 12

How to Collect

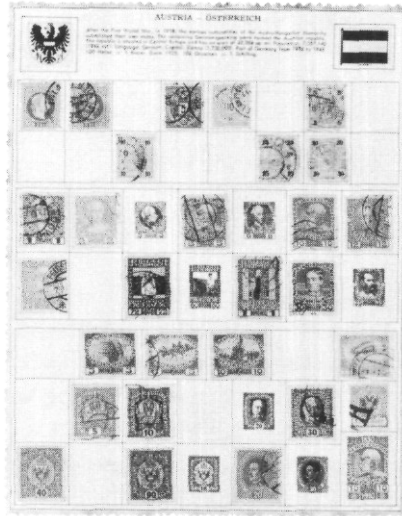


As WE HAVE SEEN from Chapter 2 there are a great many different kinds of postage stamps. The problem arises just what should you, or I, as individuals decide to collect? Shall we collect the stamps of the world without discrimination? Or should we limit our fields of endeavor? In a previous chapter where we have outlined the steps in starting a collection, we have advised that the beginner should start out collecting "the world." This is good advice, for the tyro needs to learn about *stamps* and not just about some particular kind of stamp. The first few thousand stamps should be world wide in variety and cover all kinds of issues. They will, of course, be stamps of very low cost. Indeed their individual cost may not be determined. But they will supply the basic knowledge that every advanced collector has to have before he can build a worth-while collection of any description. The term "worth-while" is used for lack of a better description. Every collection is worth while no matter how

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embryonic. From the very beginning we start to learn about things that are of interest and will stand us in good stead as we progress.

We crawl before we walk, we attend grade school before high school, high school before college, go through "basic training" on entering the Army, and



Stamps of Austria mounted on a page of The New World-Wide Album.

apprenticeship before the trade is learned, and we must be born before we can die. There is no short cut to anything. Life must be lived and stamps must be collected to bring full enjoyment.

Many collectors, however erudite, never entirely give up general collecting.

However, almost everyone looks forward to completing a project and if our goal is a collection of the entire

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world, we shall have to be endowed with a very substantial fortune indeed — let alone the time involved in building such a collection. Hence, after a few years of general collecting, most collectors turn toward specializing. They concentrate on a suitable project that has possibilities of completion within reasonable limits.

There are many ways that this can be done. One of the simplest, and one very widely practiced, is to concentrate on the stamps of a single country, or on a group of countries like Great Britain and colonies, France and colonies, Latin America, etc. Other collectors major in different kinds of stamps, such as airmails, special-delivery stamps, postage-due stamps, etc.

For most any group along these lines special catalogs, albums and "study groups" are available as many have traveled these same roads and you will have much company.

Many people have confined their collecting to Roosevelt stamps, *i.e.* stamps that have been issued in honor of our late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt by various nations throughout the world and here, too, special albums are available. Still others collect "Lincolniana," "Lindberghiana," and similar selected subjects.

Such limiting of collecting to the pictures on the stamps leads to one of the most fascinating forms of collecting — the "subject" or "topical" collection.

Here one collects according to pictures on stamps that have relation to the subject at hand. Thus, the late Theodore E. Steinway built a world-famous collection of "music" in stamps. Francis Cardinal Spellman's collection of "Religion" is equally well known. This example has been widely emulated and there are many col-

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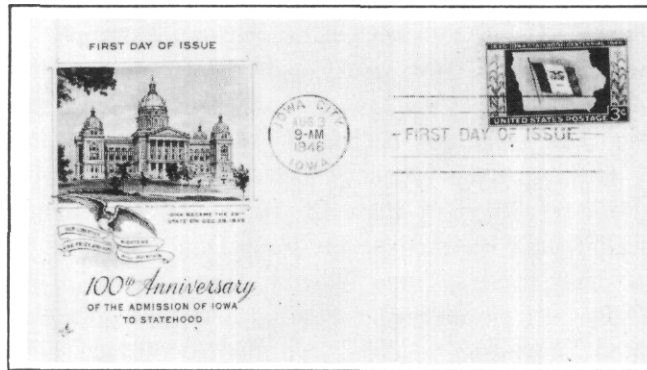
lectors of "music" and "Religion." Many collect "ships," others "birds," "animals," even "mountains." The latter offer a fascinating field for the youngster and the nature-minded. I recall the collection built by Carla Pelander, one of the most charming and captivating persons I have ever known. Carla was only eight years old when I first saw her standing before an audience of grown-ups displaying and explaining her collection of animals and birds. Young as she was she held her audience enthralled as she turned the pages and told her story of each separate stamp that had been presented to her by her "hunters." The first few pages of her collection bore the autographs of the "hunters," including all of the prominent names of philately and many, many others. Each hunter had earned his right to sign her album by presenting the collection with a stamp not previously included. To have known Carla was to have known one of the fine persons of this world. Wherever she went people called upon her to show her collection and deliver her lecture. Whenever she did, her audience sat spellbound. She was a great philatelist. Her life was snuffed out by a terrible disease within two years after I first met her, but she remains in my memory and in the memory of all who knew her as one of the truly great collectors.

What Carla did with her animal collection others have followed. The possibilities are unlimited and one of the many attractions of "subject" collecting is that it is world wide. Your interest in stamps never wanes for the issues of all the world must be carefully watched for stamps that will fit into your scheme.

With this kind of a collection you are on your own. There are no catalogues or printed albums to guide and

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restrict you. The albums you will use will be blank albums, the reference books will be a general catalogue of the world's stamps, encyclopedias and similar materials to uncover the stories behind the stamps you place in your collection. You will be amazed at the knowledge you will amass from such a philatelic endeavor. Not the least comforting aspect of the subject collection is that it is always "complete" yet may always be added to. Each page as you mount it becomes a unit in itself. Many have found this a most satisfying form of collecting stamps.



First Day Cover. Note cancellation indicating first day of issue. The design at the left is called a cachet. Such covers are prepared well in advance of the date on which the stamp will be issued as announced by the Post Office Department. They are often handsomely engraved as shown in the illustration.

Still another fascinating collection is one of "First Days." This consists of entire covers to which is attached a new stamp mailed on the first day of its issue. In the United States the Post Office designates certain cities to inaugurate the first day sale of a new stamp and provides

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a special "First Day" cancellation to be applied to all covers mailed from that post office, bearing the new stamp, on the specified day. Several firms provide envelopes with very handsome "cachets" which may be purchased and used with the new stamps. A "cachet" is an appropriate picture printed, usually, at the left side of the envelope which, in its design and wording, has special significance for the new stamp issue. Many of these commercially prepared First Day cachets are beautiful works of art printed from copper or steel engravings. They are obtainable for a few cents each weeks in advance of the appearance of the new stamps. The United States Post Office assists by providing means for you to send your First Day envelopes to the Postmaster where the stamps will be issued. You enclose the necessary postage to cover cost of the new stamps and the postmaster will apply them to your envelopes, properly cancel them with the special First Day postmark, and send them back to you. Warning, the number of such First Day envelopes any individual may send to the designated Postmaster is usually limited to twelve.

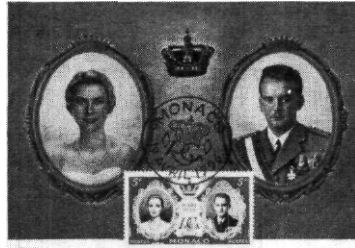
If one does not wish to go to all of the trouble incident to preparing his own first day covers there are many services available that will undertake this work for you at a minimum cost and assure you of receiving all new stamps as they are issued.

On special occasions, and for special stamp issues, some foreign nations have also provided special First Day cancellations to newly issued stamps.

But First Day collectors are by no means limited to the special printed cachet prepared by commercial firms. Any envelope bearing the correctly issued new stamp and

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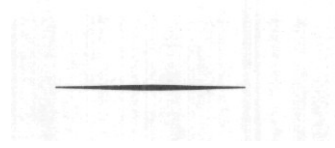
cancelled with the official First Day cancellation provided by the Post Office is equally a "First Day" cover. There is a First Day Catalogue and first day collectors have their own society, nation-wide in scope. Started only a few years ago, the society is well on the way to enrolling five thousand members. Known as the "First Day Cover Society" the group publishes its own magazine, appropriately named "First Days," and holds annual conventions in various cities.



An adaptation of the First Day collection is the collection of Maximum cards. This consists of a picture postcard to which is attached a stamp bearing a duplicate of the picture on the card. The stamp is usually placed to the lower left on the face of the card. If a "First Day" or other cancellation is applied, or, perhaps, an autograph of the person pictured on both stamp and card, so much the better.

We have mentioned but a few of the ways stamps are collected. The versatility of the hobby is unlimited and no doubt you will develop your one particular "specialty" as you progress. Most everyone does.

Paper and Watermarks



THE MANUFACTURE of paper is one of the oldest arts known to mankind and remains today basically one of the simplest arts. It is of interest to the stamp collector principally because of the watermarks and some of the special papers used for making some nineteenth-century postage stamps. Presently "ordinary" paper with or without the watermark is used universally throughout the world for making postage stamps.

Basically paper is made by reducing wood fiber to a pulp and then spreading this pulp evenly on a surface to dry. Almost all modern paper is made from wood pulp to which rag or other fibers may, or may not, have been added. Straw of various kinds, papyrus and other vegetable fibers have also been used but today such special papers are seldom used in the ordinary channels of commerce.

The wood fiber may be reduced to pulp in various ways. The logs may be placed in hydraulic presses and

PAPER & WATERMARKS

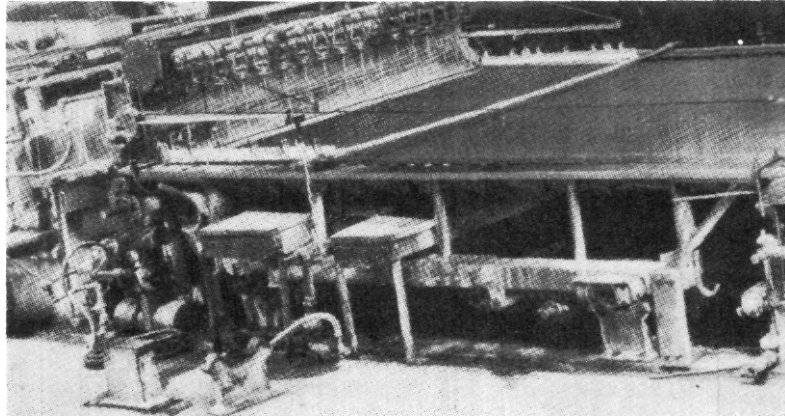
forced against millstones or they may be chipped into small pieces and "digested" with chemicals. In either process a great deal of water is used, so paper mills are almost always located along a river which may be diverted through the plant to provide the power to drive the machinery and, more important, to provide the flux that carries the pulp through the required processes.

Other than the very few cases where paper is still hand-made — principally as a hobby or for demonstration purposes — all paper is made on a Fourdrinier Paper Making Machine or a development of that machine.

It is during the process of making paper that the watermark is applied. The pulp in a highly saturated state passes through "beaters," "digesters" and other machines where it is given its sizing and the proper chemicals are added to bleach, color and otherwise prepare it. When ready the pulp is allowed to flow upon a fast-moving screen which, by oscillation and shaking removes a considerable quantity of the water. Near the end of this endless screen there is suspended a hollow cylinder called a "dandy roll," the purpose of which is to squeeze more water from the pulp.

Watching a machine in operation one sees only a wet surface moving rapidly toward the dandy roll but leaving the roll, as if by magic, one sees the partially formed paper rapidly moving toward the drying rolls. These latter are a battery of large-diameter steam-heated rolls over which passes a cloth belt or "blanket." After passing under the dandy rolls the now partially dry paper passes almost immediately to the drying process. It is picked up by the blanket and travels over and around each drying roll in such a manner that both sides are presented to

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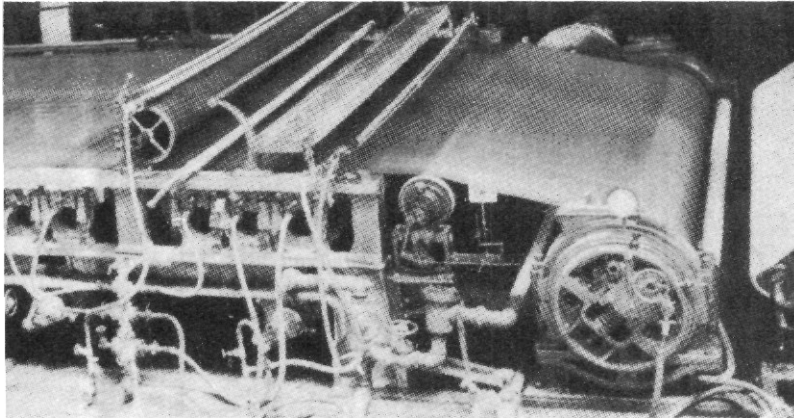
Fourdrinier machine.

the surface of each roll during the process. Upon leaving the drying rolls the paper is completed. It may be wound directly upon cores or it may pass through a calendar to give it a finish before being wound on cores. But once over the drying rolls the paper is, to all intents and purposes, "made." It can be further processed by converters and various finishes applied for special purposes such as "linen finish" writing paper, "coated paper," etc.

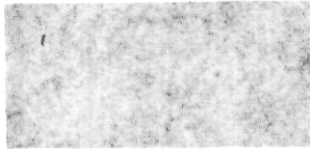
Other than the fancy finishes which are given to the finished or partially finished paper, the process remains the same and is tremendously fast. It is a worth-while sight to visit a paper mill and watch a veritable forest being fed into the maw of this monster only to come out the other end a continuous roll of paper as much as 120 inches wide and traveling almost a mile a minute!

The stamp collector's primary concern is with two stages of this process.

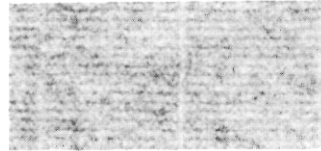
PAPER & WATERMARKS



First, the dandy roll. This cylinder applies to the wet pulp the finish that we describe as "wove" or "laid" paper. If the cylinder is made of a wire screen in which the horizontal wires are equal in number to the vertical wires — as, for instance, ordinary mosquito netting — then the



"Wove" paper.

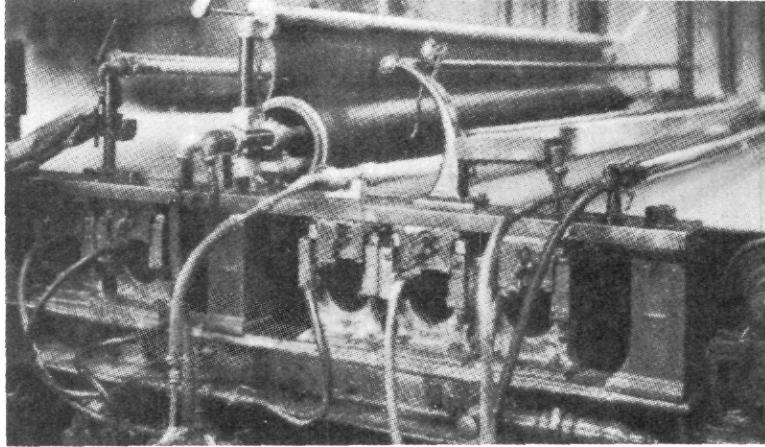


"Laid" paper.

pulp that passes under it will be known as "wove" paper. If the surface of the roll is made up of parallel wires held in place by widely spaced supporting wires, the pulp passing under it will be known as "laid" paper., *i.e.*

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the lines of the dandy roll will appear as laid parallel to each other. The supporting wires, which also show up on laid paper, are called "batonnes" and we have "laid batonne"; or if the wires are close to each other we call the result "laid quadrille," or plain "quadrille" paper.



"Dandy roll".

Both laid and wove paper are, of course, actually watermarked paper for the laid lines or the even texture we see, when holding the paper before a light, is the result of the surface of the Dandy Roll being pressed into the wet pulp. However, watermarks are actually an added device. Small bits of metal, called "bits," are stamped out in required design and soldered or wired to the surface of the Dandy Roll. This can, and often is, done on either a wove or a laid-surface dandy roll. But whether on wove or laid paper, if there be a watermarked device, collectors refer to the paper as "watermarked."

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There are then four distinctive descriptions used by collectors in describing the paper upon which stamps are printed:

Laid	Wove
Laid, watermarked	Wove, watermarked

In addition to the watermarks that are intentionally impressed into the wet pulp from the dandy roll, there is an additional watermark of interest to stamp collectors. This is the "stitch" watermark. In appearance it resembles a row of stitches, which are exactly what caused it. The "stitch" watermark, of importance on some early United States stamps, is caused by the blanket which carries the partially dry pulp over the drying rolls. This blanket, or more correctly a "belt," is stitched at various places to hold it together. When this line of stitches happens to strike the partially wet pulp at or near the point when the pulp passes from the Fourdrinier screen to the drying rolls—and the paper is then in a very wet stage—the stitches of the blanket will impress themselves into the paper and cause an additional, and unintentional, watermark. As the blanket is extremely long, running some hundreds of feet, and may not be stitched for a considerable length, the "stitch" watermark will occur only at infrequent intervals. Hence, when discovered on a stamp, it is often prized by collectors.

Almost without exception the watermarks on postage stamps are thin spots impressed into the wet pulp. When held before a light, these thin spots show up as lighter areas than the rest of the paper. Everyone is familiar with this form of watermark as it occurs on "bond" paper, used extensively for typewriter paper. The exact reverse of this watermark is also possible—a watermark in which

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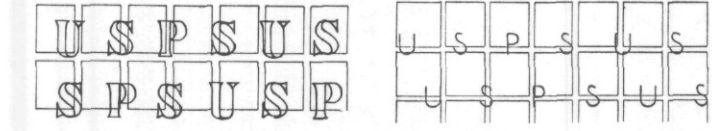
the designs attached to the dandy roll cause a thick spot in the paper. This form of watermarking is often called a "shadow" mark. Stamp collectors are familiar with it on some of the early stamps of Russia. Carried to its ultimate development the shadow mark can be of greatest artistic quality and the most beautiful pictures may be reproduced within the paper by this process.

Generally the watermarks used on paper on which postage stamps are printed are very small designs, often arranged so that at least one complete design will fall on every printed stamp. In some instances the watermarks are so placed on the paper that each completed design will fall exactly upon each individual stamp. Hence, some of the early stamps of Great Britain will show a watermark consisting of a tiny rose, a thistle, and a shamrock, each of which appears in one of the corners of the stamp. An early Mexican envelope shows a very beautiful watermark of the coat of arms of the country so placed that it falls exactly within the center of the finished envelope. Such watermarks require careful placement of the bits upon the dandy roll and meticulous registering of his plates by the printer.

Watermarks were originally adopted as a precaution against counterfeiting, and careful registering so that the designs would fall on specified areas of the finished stamp was once considered worth the extra work and expense involved. However, it was very soon discovered that this extra work was not practical from an economic standpoint so watermarks were applied in an all-over design—groupings of letters or repetition of designs. Our own United States stamps were watermarked with the letters "USPS"—[United States Postal Service]—in large outline

PAPER & WATERMARKS

letters from 1895 to about 1910. Only a single letter would appear on an individual stamp, or perhaps parts of two or more letters according to how the printing happened to fall upon the paper. About 1910 this



Double-line watermark.

Single-line watermark.

watermark was changed to smaller single-line letters but spaced wider apart so that again only a single letter or parts of several letters would appear on an individual stamp. After 1916 the use of watermarked paper was abandoned by the United States Post Office. On the other hand, from the very first issue all stamps of the British Empire have been printed on watermarked paper.

Sometimes a watermark may be a large coat of arms covering a large area of paper and, of course, stamps printed on such paper will show only the very smallest part of the whole design. Such watermarks would be described by collectors as "Watermarked Coat of Arms in the Sheet."

In addition to watermarks and different kinds of paper, collectors identify their stamps by the texture or color of the papers upon which they are printed. Hence, we have "granite" paper and "silk" paper, both of which are made from paper in which small particles of silk thread are introduced into the pulp. When these pieces of thread are so well chopped up as not to be discernible to the eye the paper is called "granite," and when the silk threads are merely short pieces, such as may be seen in any dollar bill, the paper is known as "silk."

This block contains 20 geometric patterns arranged in a grid-like fashion. The patterns include:

- A triangle with an anchor inside.
- A semi-circle with the text "GOVERNMENT OF COCHIN" and a central emblem.
- A triangle with a stylized animal head (possibly a deer or antelope) inside.
- A square with a flower inside.
- A square with a cross and a circle inside.
- A large square with a crown and a stylized "R" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "AC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "CC" inside.
- A square with a stylized "S" or "Z" inside.
- A square with a crown inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "AC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "CC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "AC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "CC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "AC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "CC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "AC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "CC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "AC" inside.
- A square with a crown and the letters "CC" inside.

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PAPER & WATERMARKS



1891

Brazil

Argentina



Hungary

Italy



Germany, Danzig and others



Uruguay



Finland



Tannu Touva



Tonga



Mexico



Brazil

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO STAMP COLLECTING

In Great Britain a special paper was used for the first, "Mulready," envelopes and for some other stamp issues. This was a paper into the pulp of which had been introduced a continuous silk thread or threads. Sometimes this is called "Dickinson" paper after the name of the inventor of the process but usually it is known to collectors as "paper with silk threads."

As with watermarks, all of these various kinds of special paper were introduced as safeguards against counterfeiting. Almost all have been discarded by governments issuing stamps although the watermark is still used extensively.

Generally speaking, such counterfeiting as has been done has been directed toward swindling collectors. There are very few instances on record where stamps have been counterfeited to swindle governments. Some instances of defrauding a government have, of course, been noted — for instance, the so-called "Chicago" counterfeit of the United States two-cent stamp. The counterfeits of these were printed in sheets, just like those made by the Government, and sold to users of mail who did not know they were counterfeit. Of course, the persons actually buying the stamps either knew or could suspect that they were counterfeit but the firms themselves that used the stamps had no knowledge. To market counterfeits of this sort it is necessary to involve mail clerks of firms using large quantities of stamps, and not only is the practice dangerous to the counterfeiter, who can never be sure that he will not be exposed, but also the returns are rather negligible for the risk and work involved. Hence, the fear of large-scale frauds against the Government, which were of such concern to officials during

PAPER & WATERMARKS

the nineteenth century, has largely disappeared. And the adoption of special papers and similar devices has practically been abandoned as too costly and unnecessary. Paper may be, and often is, dyed various colors and used to give printed stamps a distinctly different look. The United States has used many colors of paper for its stamped envelopes principally to please users who wish something distinctive. Prior to World War II, this practice of having various-colored envelopes had been slowly cut down to the point that only three colors were available—white, amber (a yellowish color) and blue. As a conservation measure all but white paper envelopes were dropped from the schedules with the advent of the war and the colors have never been restored to use. Incidentally, we have noted that all United States envelopes have been printed on watermarked paper. This watermark serves a particular purpose in identifying the manufacturer of the paper and also the quality of the paper. It will come as a surprise to many that until recently you could purchase envelopes in either of two qualities of paper— "standard" or "extra quality." The latter are the kind you received when you purchased one or more at a Post Office window. Should you have wished a box of envelopes, however, and to save a few cents on their cost you could have ordered "standard quality." However, this, too, has been discontinued. Today our stamped envelopes are produced of one quality only and on white paper only.

The so-called "bluish" paper of the United States 1908 issue of stamps is not caused by a dye, but rather by a high rag content introduced into the paper as an experiment.

Printing

BECAUSE SOME STAMPS have been printed by two or more methods and because specialists often collect various kinds of printing flaws, the entire subject of printing is of interest to all collectors. In fact, an advanced collector will often have a knowledge of printing far surpassing that of a great many commercial printers.

Basically, printing falls into two categories: recess or intaglio printing, and relief, sometimes called "letterpress" and more often called simply "printing." The latter is by far the most common method in use throughout the world and in principle has changed very little since the fifteenth century when Johann Gutenberg printed his Bibles from cast movable type. Prior to that time printing was done from blocks upon which had been cut the entire message to be printed. Such printing was an art well known to the Chinese who, indeed, even had movable type.

It is interesting to note that the "block books" which preceded the introduction of cast movable type—ascribed

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to Johann Gutenberg—have through the evolution of time become, in a large way, the manner in which many modern books are published. Thus, the history of common printing has completed its circle: first, from blocks upon which a whole page was cut into relief, then movable type which allowed a page to be set up from individual pieces of type, and now the printing plate made from an impression of the movable type.

Intaglio, or line engraving, must have been used in the very early stages of printing. Certainly we know that the great goldsmiths of the Renaissance would rub lamp black or another similar substance into the engraved lines of their work and take an impression on paper to see how they were progressing. Such impressions were, of course, intaglio printings or, as we might say, engravings.

Line engraving has always been a favorite medium for the reproduction of printed money and other valuable securities. Because an entire plate had to be cut into the metal by hand, it was a costly and difficult process requiring the highest artistic ability. Shortly before the introduction of the world's first postage stamps in 1840, Jacob Perkins of Massachusetts invented a process for reproducing a line-engraved design on a larger metal area as many times as might be desired. Unable to interest American capital in his invention, Perkins went to England where he founded the historic line-engraving house of Perkins, Bacon & Co., who produced the world's first postage stamp for Great Britain. With but one brief exception, Perkins' process has been used exclusively for the production of United States postage stamps from the first issue until the present.

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It is also the process used for the production of most British and many other stamps of the world.

Perkins did not invent line engraving. He invented a process of transferring a steel engraving to another piece of metal. This process plays such an important part in philately that it is necessary for all collectors to have a basic understanding of it and the method of printing stamps from the plates.

The first step of the process is to engrave the die. This is done on a "soft" block of steel by the most skilled artisan. Every line and detail of the design of the proposed stamp is cut into the steel by hand tools—small sharp chisels known as burins or gravers. The burin is held in the hand and worked carefully into the steel to cut the line desired. In all cases the design is engraved in reverse on the die.

After the engraver has completed his task, the die is hardened and burnished. When completed, an impression is taken to determine if the design is perfect. Such impressions are called die proofs. As often as not, die proofs are made in various colors to determine just how the design will look in different color schemes. Such are known in philately as "trial color die proofs."

When the die proof has been accepted, the die is placed in a "transfer press." Above the die is suspended, in powerful trunions, a roller of soft steel. When everything is in position the roller of steel is lowered and brought to bear under great pressure against the hardened die. The die, which is on a movable bed, is now passed under the roll. The great pressure applied causes an exact duplicate of the design on the die to be taken up on the softer steel of the roller. The process is re-

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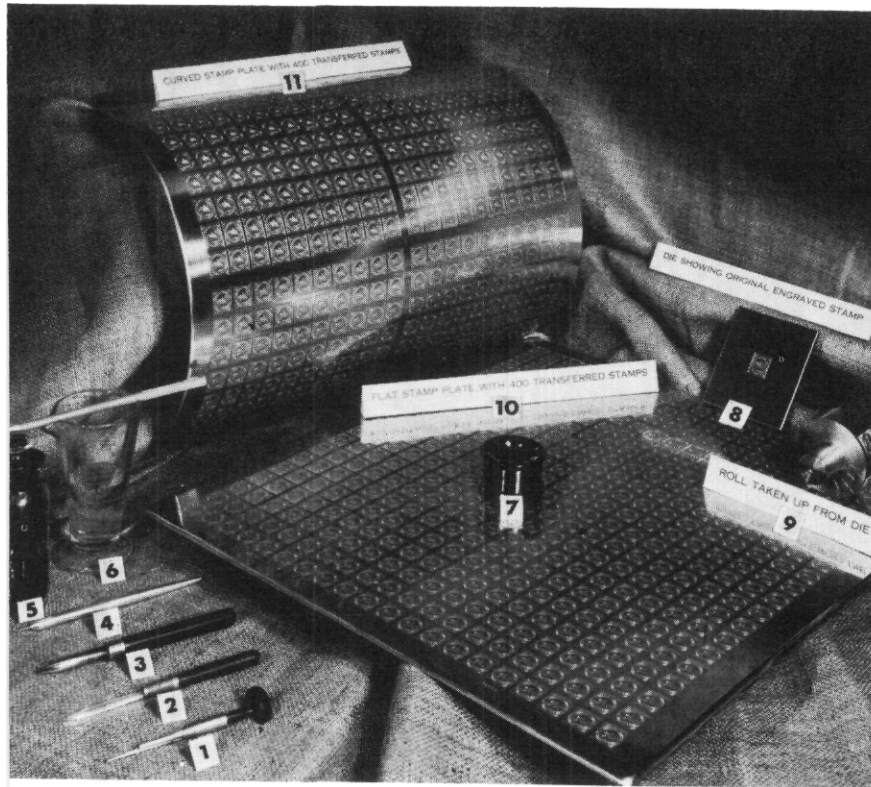


Photo by Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

*Tools used for the preparation of a steel plate:
1. Graver. 2. Scraper. 3. Burnisher. 4. Etching point.
5. Liquid etching ground. 6. Acid. 7. Engraver's
glass. 8. Original die. 9. Transfer roll. 10. Flat stamp
plate with 400 transferred stamps. 11. Curved stamp
plate.*

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peated, back and forth, until the design of the die has been transferred to the roller in the required depth.

The roller is then removed, hardened, and burnished. It is now ready to perform its function as indicated by its name—the "transfer roll." Once the roller is back in position in the transfer press, with a suitably prepared plate of soft steel placed under it in the position formerly occupied by the die, it now becomes possible to "lay down" the design on the transfer roll to the plate as many times as may be required. Hence the single design of the die may be repeated on a larger plate indefinitely, limited only by the size of the plate itself. After the transfers are completed, the plate is hardened, burnished, and ready to print.

Our first stamps were printed from plates of two hundred subjects each. Now our stamps are printed from plates of four hundred subjects.

Theoretically the design on the die can, via this process, be repeated on the plate in minutest detail and every such transfer will be an exact duplicate of the original. Actually this theory is a fact and the skill of transferring designs has become so advanced that, barring an accident to the plate, the world's greatest experts are unable to detect any difference whatever between the four hundred subjects of a modern plate. Every line, to the most minute scratch, that appears on the original die will appear on each and every one of the designs on the multiple-subject plate. Each design is an identical twin of the other, and all are identical to the die.

However, the bank note companies which produced our first stamps were not so adept in the art of making the transfers. Hence—and especially when a design was

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of difficult outline, as were the one- and ten-cent stamps of 1851-7—the transfer operator sometimes failed to move his plate far enough to make a complete transfer of the design. Thus we find on our printed stamps so-called "short-transfers." And, again, the operator may have made his first "light" transfer of the design out of alignment and so would shift the position of the plate to its proper place. However, when he did so, the first light impression would, of course, remain on the plate and, when stamps were printed therefrom, these doublings of lines would be apparent. Such are called "double transfers." Or, perhaps, after completing a plate, one or more of the impressions were found not to print well—the transfer may have been too shallow. In such cases the plate would sometimes be returned to the press and an effort made to "re-enter" the transfer roll exactly into the design. When such re-entry was successful, no visible results could be seen on the stamps but, when slightly off the original, the stamps resulting from this impression would show the error. Such are called "re-entries."

Still again, instead of trying to re-enter the design with the transfer roll, "recutting" would be resorted to. In this case the engraver would recut by hand the lines that were not properly transferred. Such hand-recutting of the designs on the plate would, of course, be heavier than the other lines in the design and would show up in the printed stamps. Such stamps are called "recut."

Now it makes no difference just how these various things came to take place. The fact remains that the things I have described as "could have happened" actually did happen and the results as noted on the printed stamps are as described. Those with pedantic minds will assert

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that such and such really didn't happen to position so and so on the plate but, instead, so and so happened. We are here concerned with the results and how to look for and recognize them for what they are.

Great studies have been made of these early United States stamps and every single position of every stamp of the two hundred that make up the printing plate has been identified. Such collecting is known as "plating." Many early line-engraved stamps can be so "plated." Indeed, it is quite possible that all of them can. It is a challenge that has intrigued many an advanced collector and one worthy of his mettle.

With the increase in skill in transferring designs it became less and less possible to discover differences in the designs but occasionally double transfers are still to be found on our modern stamps and, when the process of making the printing plates is rushed, sometimes a considerable number of such flaws may occur. An example would be some of the stamps of the 1932 George Washington Bicentennial issue where some really extraordinary double transfers have been discovered.

Bear in mind that such a flaw is constant and will always appear on exactly the same stamp of the sheet so long as this particular plate is in production or until the flaw is discovered and corrected.

One of the most flagrant flaws of this nature—in fact, probably the outstanding error of philatelic history—is the so-called "five-cent error" that occurred in sheets of two-cent stamps printed in 1917. As we have noted in our description of the making of line-engraved steel plates, proofs are usually taken before the plate is put into production and any errors or flaws noted thereon

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are marked and the plate is then corrected. In 1917 on one plate of two-cent stamps—of four hundred subjects of course—it was noted that three impressions on the plate were not satisfactory. These three designs were



*"Five-cent error" in a
sheet of two-cent stamps.*

erased from the plate (an intricate process but capable of being performed almost perfectly under modern methods) and a completely new transfer was laid down in these positions. In this instance the transfer operator, by mistake, selected the five-cent design on the transfer roll. His error went undiscovered and a considerable number of sheets of stamps were printed and circulated bearing these five-cent stamps in sheets of two-cent denomination before the error was discovered and the plate retired from use.

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO STAMP COLLECTING

PREPARATION OF THE STEEL PLATE

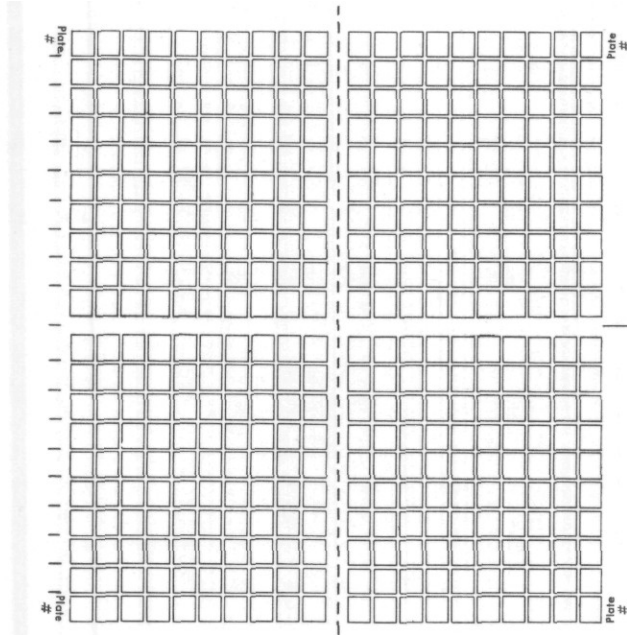
Prior to the actual laying down of the designs from the transfer roll as described earlier, the steel printing plate must be prepared.

Everything that is done to this plate will show up on the printed stamps and so has a bearing upon the stamps you collect.

After the steel plate has been annealed and made ready to receive the transfers, the exact position of each design is indicated upon the plate by means of "guide dots" or very faintly scratched lines. Bearing in mind that the paper upon which the stamps will be printed is first moistened and so will shrink, perhaps unevenly, the craftsman lays out his plate by means of precision tools to allow a sufficient space between each stamp both horizontally and vertically. Sometimes he will allow a difference in the width between the rows of the stamps, as in the case of the first stamps issued in 1908. Here it was found that, owing to the excessive unevenness in paper shrinkage, there was considerable waste because the sheets of stamps did not pass through the perforating machines correctly. Hence experiments were made by spacing the six outside vertical rows of each printing plate a full millimeter wider than the inside rows. Naturally such a difference in the spacing of the stamps was not lost on stamp collectors who promptly had a new variety for their collections. It must be admitted that, so far as the author knows, this is the only occasion that a difference in width of spacing between the rows of stamps was attempted on the printing plates.

PRINTING

Among our nineteenth-century stamps especially, it is possible to see the position dots and traces of the guide lines on the printed stamps. In fact, these are very helpful to those who attempt to "plate" certain issues. But it is not unusual to find them even on the most modern issues.



The layout of a 400 subject rotary plate showing electric eye guides for the perforating machine in center and at left.

After the plate has received all of its impressions, it receives other permanent markings. The plate number is set in on the margins as well as, sometimes, other indicia of the various phases of manufacture. Permanent guide

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO STAMP COLLECTING

lines are cut between the four panes of one hundred stamps each. At the extreme margin of each of these guide lines an arrow is cut to call particular attention to the line. These guide lines are provided to assist the cutting operator when he divides the sheets of four hundred stamps into panes of one hundred in which form stamps are sent out to the Post Office. For modern stamps, which are printed from rotary presses, special markings are provided on the margins of the sheet to guide the electric scanning mechanism that guides the perforating machines. These marks are known to collectors as "electric eye" stamps. At the present time, all



A plate block of four stamps.

United States stamps produced from rotary presses are perforated by machines guided by the electric eye. The markings vary as experiments were made in putting the electric-eye mechanism into practice. The earliest markings were a series of heavy short vertical dashes dividing the sheet into right and left panes. Later markings are horizontal dashes placed at the other margin of the continuous sheet of paper on which the stamps are printed.

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Still other markings which are applied to the margins of the steel plate and which, of course, print on the sheet margins of the finished stamps, are the registration marks to guide the printer when producing two-colored stamps. Each plate for each color is provided with a registration mark so that the printer will know when he has his paper in proper alignment.

All of these markings are of great interest to collectors and help identify his stamps.

PRINTING FROM A LINE-ENGRAVED STEEL PLATE

The finished steel plate, ready for the printer, presents a perfectly smooth, highly polished surface (sometimes chromium-plated) in which the lines to be printed are recessed. To ink this plate, a well-inked swab is smeared over its entire surface and well rubbed in so that every minute line will receive its full share of ink. The surplus ink remaining on the surface of the plate is carefully removed and, finally, the operator burnishes the plate, sometimes with the palms of his hands. The plate now seems to be without ink. In fact, however, every line, every tiny scratch, is filled to its surface with ink. The plate is now ready to print.

A piece of moistened paper is carefully laid over the plate and both are passed under a felt roller under pressure. The paper is forced into the crevices of the plate and picks up the ink. The sheet of paper is now laid carefully aside to dry. Eventually it is pressed flat and made ready for the perforating machines. If produced in a rotary press, the paper is dry and all of the operations

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described are done mechanically, the finished stamps coming from the presses in a continuous roll.

This method of printing leaves lines of ink in varying depths—as they may have been engraved by the engraver on the original die—and because of this third dimension, the result is particularly pleasing. The tones and shadows are deeper and richer than can possibly be obtained from any method of relief or letterpress printing. This in itself is a considerable safeguard against the counterfeiter for he cannot duplicate this depth of ink without, in fact, actually using the identical method of printing. It is readily seen how difficult such a process would be. He cannot successfully reproduce the original die for this is completely handwork and, as every student of art is well aware, each artist leaves some mannerism peculiar to his work on each engraving he does.

For this reason the line-engraved steel-plate process is used almost exclusively by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Washington, D. C, and by a select group of bank-note engravers who manufacture postage stamps and money for governments, and other securities where the utmost protection against counterfeiting is required. The number of expert engravers in the world is very small and their work is well known to all serious philatelists as well as to all others in the trade. Once a steel die has been cut, it is a permanent affair that, if kept carefully, will outlast the ages.

This method of printing finds very little use in commercial channels and when so used the printing is done from the original dies usually on copper. The author knows of no instance where the multiple-subject plate method developed by Perkins is used in ordinary commercial channels.

PRINTING

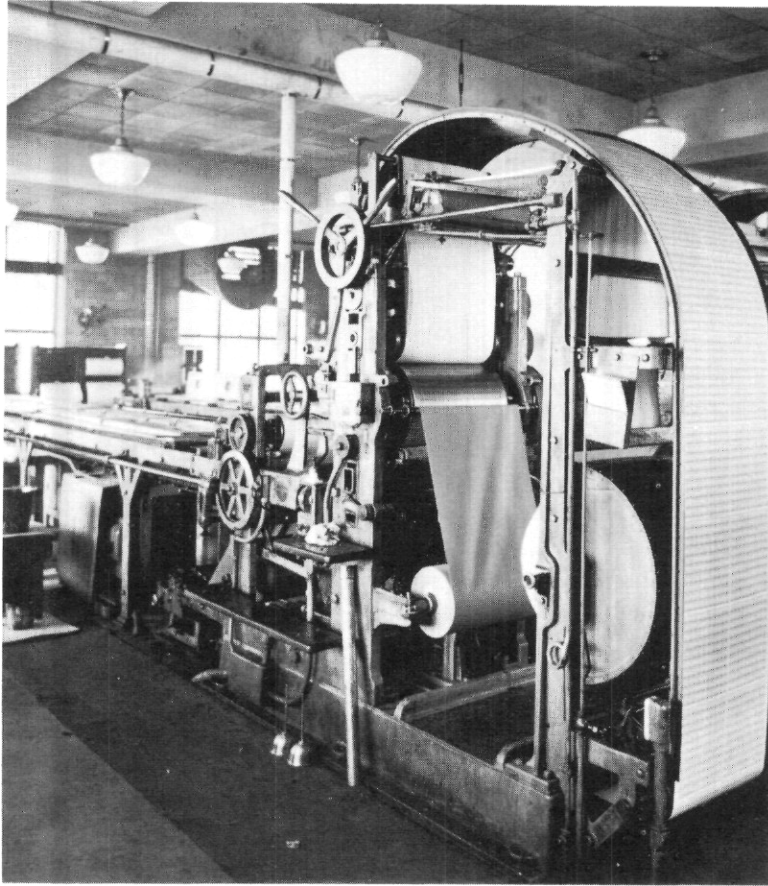


Photo by Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Large rotary press.

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PHOTOGRAVURE AND ROTOGRAVURE

These are methods of intaglio printing widely used in commercial printing (and by various other names), as for the Sunday pictorial supplement of newspapers. It is true intaglio printing in that the printing is from recess-engraved plates. However, such plates are made by means of photography through screens—like the ordinary half-tone illustration in "slick paper" magazines. These gravure plates differ from the ordinary half-tone illustration in that the latter is a relief and the gravure is a recess plate.

Photography and screens, or "dust boxes" which coat the plate unevenly to make it appear that a screen has not been used, are also sometimes employed for the production of postage stamps. Such is the case with some of the British Empire stamps. When skillfully used in combination with line engraving, the result is excellent and often even more pleasing than the strictly line-engraved design. It is possible by use of photography to soften some of the details and, in combination with the handwork of the line engraver, the effect is striking and not obtainable by either method alone.

All gravure work, whether line-engraved or by photographic process, is identifiable by its rough feel, caused by the varying thickness of the ink deposited upon the paper. We all unconsciously practice the trick of feeling a calling card to see if it is printed or engraved, and considerable prestige is attached to the engraved calling card. So, too, in a large way do the engraved postage stamps of the world receive prestige over other kinds.

PRINTING

"PRINTED" STAMPS

In addition to the line-engraved postage stamps we have described at length, a great many postage stamps of the world have been printed by more ordinary processes. All forms of printing have been used. Some of the world's most valuable stamps—like the Hawaiian "Missionaries"—have been printed from type set up in small printing shops and produced from ordinary platen or cylinder presses—just such equipment as you will see in any commercial printing shop.



Hawaiian "Missionary" stamp.

Many other stamps have been printed by lithography—a method of printing which, during the past generation, has seen enormous gains in technique and is far removed from its original processes as discovered by Alois Senefelder about 1800.

The process depends upon the natural phenomenon that grease or fatty substances will repel water while other substances will "hold" water. Senefelder discovered that certain kinds of stone would soak up water. By drawing a design or printing words on the stones with a fatty-substance ink, he had what proved to be a very satisfactory printing machine. After the words had been drawn the stones were immersed in water. The fatty ink

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repelled the water, the uncovered surfaces soaked up the water. An ink roller passed over the stone depositing ink only on the drawn design, for the water in the stone repelled it at other places.

The process was completed by placing a piece of paper over the stone and applying pressure.

Lithography has seen many improvements and developments. Modern lithography and its step-child, offset printing, through the use of the camera and the substitution of zinc and aluminum for the heavy stones, have made enormous advances and only in principle resemble the original process developed by Senefelder.

Lithography offered a reasonable and very satisfactory substitute for the line-engraved steel-plate process. The intricate designs that characterize much steel-plate work could be drawn in detail on the stones to reproduce in clearest detail. The only element lacking was, of course, that the lithographed article presented a perfectly flat surface and, thus, lacked the depth of tone the steel engraving produced.

A great many postage stamps of the world have been produced by lithography and some stamps have been produced in the same design by both lithography and steel engraving.

Many lithographed stamps may be plated rather easily. As lithography was practiced up to a generation ago, it was necessary to reproduce on the stone as many designs as were to be printed. To overcome the difficulties of reproducing the design of a stamp several hundred times, lithographers resorted to a multiplication process. A design would be made and transferred to a stone ten times. Then this multiple of ten would be transferred to

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a larger stone ten additional times. And the process continued to the desired number of reproductions. It is generally possible to identify the ten individual stamps (or other number as the case might be) making up the first transfer. Then it is usually possible to identify each group of ten in the sheet. The Republic of Panama, whose stamps have almost always been produced by the line-engraved process and which provide some of the finest examples of this work, used the lithographic method to produce two stamps in 1928 in honor of Charles A. Lindbergh's good-will flight to Central America. Evidently the lithographic method was selected in order to produce the stamps in time.



Stamp issued by the Republic of Panama to honor Lindbergh's good-will flight to Central America.

The use of "Step and Repeat" machines, by means of which the design of an individual stamp may be repeated photographically as many times as required onto a single printing plate, has enormously advanced the lithographer's art and made it quite impossible to plate with any degree of accuracy modern lithographed stamps. Our annual Christmas seals are printed from plates of as many as sixteen hundred subjects by this method.

The relief method of printing has one positive advantage over the steel engraving: it allows the printing of

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multicolored stamps. It is quite true that two-color stamps and perhaps three-color stamps have been printed from steel-engraved plates. But on all such stamps there is no positive register of the colors—nor can there be. The process of wetting the paper, often required for steel engraving, and the consequent shrinking of the paper does not permit a close register of two or more colors. (See "The wonderful Giori Press" on page 157)

Relief printing in all of its forms, however, does not require the paper to be moistened, so exact registering and even blending of colors may be obtained. In color the relief methods of printing remain supreme and have been widely used under various names and methods to fill our albums with many colorful and beautiful stamps.



The flag of Denmark appears on one of the "over-run nations" stamps.

Sometimes, as in the case of the series of stamps issued by the United States to commemorate the Overrun Nations of the world, a combination of lithography and steel engraving has been used to attain more than two colors. It was decided to illustrate in color the flag of each nation pictured on the stamps. The stamps were printed by the American Bank Note Company as this firm was experienced in and equipped to perform this compound process required. In this instance the flags in color were printed by a lithographic (offset) process and later the frames of the stamps were printed from steel-engraved

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plates. It will be noted that no attempt was made to have a close register between the lithographed centers and the line-engraved borders. Incidentally, while the American Bank Note Company had made all United States postage stamps from 1879 to 1895, at which time the Government undertook to make its own stamps, this was the first occasion since that time that any United States adhesive postage stamp had been printed outside of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, D. C.

THE WONDERFUL GIORI PRESS

We have indicated the difficulty of registering colors in multicolor printing from line engraved plates. All we have stated on this matter was true and continued to be true for all United States postage stamps printed up to July 4, 1957: On that day the Post Office Department issued the very popular "Flag Stamp" on which our national standard is shown in full color.



The Flag Stamp ushered in a new era of multicolored stamps for the United States. It was soon followed by other issues printed in two or more colors.

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The remarkable feature of these new multicolored stamps is that they are printed in all colors used simultaneously from a single printing plate.

This truly revolutionary method of printing, either from intaglio or letter press plates, is the result of an invention of Gualtiero Giori after whom the printing press performing this feat is named —the Giori Press.

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington acquired one of these presses in 1957 and promptly put it to work printing the now famous "Flag Stamp."

The small miracle of printing a design in multiple colors from a single plate with a single impression is achieved from a very simple principle. The plate itself is inked in as many colors as may be desired. Each color being applied to only that portion of the plate which is required to print that color. In other words the ink rollers are themselves printing plates which "print" their ink onto the plate which in turn will do the actual printing on paper. Hence, if two colors are desired two printing rolls are required, one for each color, each so designed as to pass ink to only certain portions of the printing plate. If three colors are wanted then three ink rollers are provided. Theoretically, at least, there is no limit to the number of colors that could be thus printed at a single impression.

The development of the Giori Press followed World War II and was first used to print postage stamps in Argentina in 1949. It is said to have also been used for some stamps of West Germany, Yugoslavia and Finland. Since its introduction at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Washington it has been used to produce many multicolored postage stamps; including Flag Stamp, the Champions of Liberty series and others.

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Some of United States Stamps printed
on Giori Press.

PRINTING



Regular



Inverted center

Canadian "Seaway" stamp

The Giori press has sounded the death knell to inverted centers of stamps printed in two colors. This was sharply brought to public attention in 1959 when the United States and Canada issued the now famous St. Lawrence Seaway commemorative stamp. The designs of the two stamps was as close to being identical as possible. The stamps were printed in two colors — red and blue. The Canadian "Seaway" stamp was printed in the usual way from two separate plates and shortly the world was electrified at the discovery of an inverted "center," the first major error ever to have been discovered on a Canadian postage stamp. Naturally collectors everywhere searched their collections in hope of finding one of these prizes. And for a while many searched vainly for a United States "Seaway" stamp with a similar inverted center. Such a search was hopeless for the United States "Seaway" stamps had been printed on the Giori press and on products of this press inverted centers are impossible.

PRINTING

OFFSET PRINTING

This is a variation of the lithograph process in which the design is transferred from the printing roller to a rubber roller and then, "offset" to the paper. It is a particularly rapid process and one that has seen considerable improvement in the last generation. It was used by the United States Government in 1918 for the production of one-cent, two-cent and three-cent stamps to relieve the Bureau of Engraving and Printing of the enormous amount of work the war had forced upon it. These stamps are really identified by their absolutely flat and "messy" appearance. They furnish collectors with a healthy group of varieties for study and are one of the most interesting interludes of our postal history.

There are, of course, a great many processes of printing that come under the general heading of relief or letterpress printing, many of which have been used to produce postage stamps. Techniques of operation differ in different countries and in different printing establishments. It is pointless to try and review them all here even if the author were qualified to do so. There is, however, one process that requires explanation for the collector of United States and other stamped envelopes. This is called "embossing."

EMBOSSING

Embossing, the method used to produce all Government stamped envelopes of the United States and several other countries, is basically letterpress printing. It differs only in that the uninked portions of the printing die

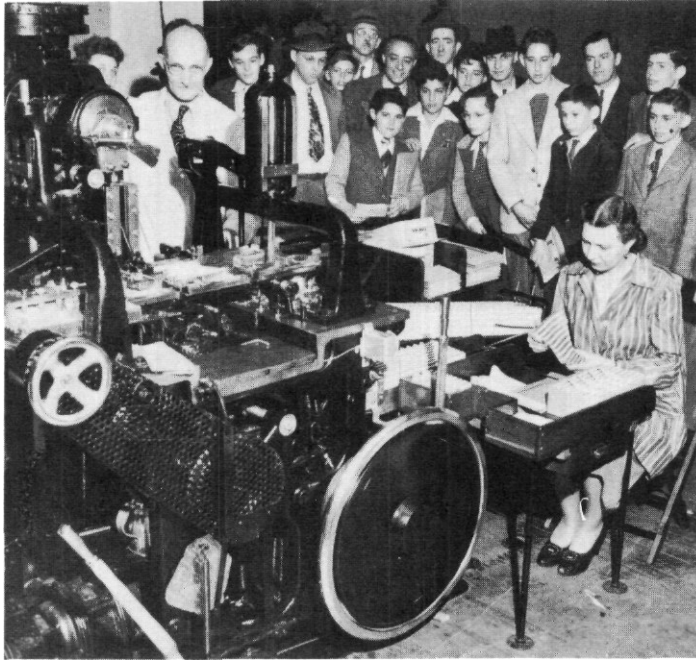
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are recessed and engraved in design. Under pressure the paper is forced into the recesses and against the engraved design so that the uninked portions of the design are raised above the surface of the paper. For instance, let us imagine that the letter "O" which you are now reading on this page had been printed against a resilient surface so that the center of the "O" would now be raised as you read it. If the pressman handling this particular page has placed a small piece of paper on the cylinder of the press just where this letter appears you will see a suggestion of embossing.

Embossed envelope stamps are, unlike the adhesive stamps we have described at such length, printed one at a time. Each envelope-making machine is equipped with a single printing die. The blanks from which the envelopes are made are cut to shape by means of cutting dies just as your mother or wife cuts out cookies from the rolled dough. These blanks are automatically fed into the envelope-making machine which embosses a stamp at the proper place, gums the flaps, folds and seals the envelope, dries the gum and counts the finished envelopes into any desired number. An ordinary box of five hundred United States envelopes is usually divided into groups of one hundred. This division is done automatically by the machine making them.

The making of an embossed die for printing our envelope stamps closely resembles the process we have described for the making of a steel-engraved printing plate. The process differs only slightly and then only in technique. The engraver, as before, cuts the design onto a steel die. In this case the die is the end of a steel shaft. After the die has been made and approved,

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The O'Connell Envelope-making machine being demonstrated at an International Philatelic Exhibition in New York.

it is hardened and now is placed directly against a somewhat larger steel shaft. Under very great pressure the hard die is forced directly against the softer steel "hub." As a considerable amount of steel has to be displaced the process requires several applications of the die to the hub. Between each application some of the displaced metal is removed from the hub. When the die has been sunk into the hub to its required depth, the hub is hardened and now, by reversing the process, is capable of striking off as many working dies as may be required.

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It will be seen at once that the working die is, in all respects, similar in function to the steel printing plate and performs the same function—namely to print stamps. It differs only in that the working die consists of a single design whereas the printing plate has many subjects. After proper hardening the working die is placed in the printing press, or envelope-making machine. Directly opposite the die there is a resilient substance, such as leather, against which the die strikes. The surface of the die is inked, the paper placed between it and the resilient tympan, and the operation of printing and embossing is completed when the press strikes against the tympan. This striking can be either by direct downward or upward pressure or by a rotary motion. In any case the pressure is sufficient to force the paper hard enough against the engraved recesses of the die to transfer these lines to the paper.

The process varies somewhat according to the different machines that may be used. The flat-bed machines usually perform all of the work described excepting only the cutting of the blanks which are always prepared ahead of time. The rotary machines usually perform only the printing of the stamp while the folding is done on other machines. Either flat-bed or rotary machines are capable of printing both the stamp and the corner card in the same operation, there being separate ink fountains provided for the different colored inks.

Quite obviously the constant striking of the printing die against the tympan will in time cause the die to wear and will also wear down the tympan. The resulting stamps will, therefore, show some differences which are often startling. While in general and as long as the

PRINTING

printing dies are in good condition and kept clean, each embossed stamp on an envelope will be an identical twin to the original die, this is not necessarily so. The uncolored portions of the printing die are recesses and do not receive ink. However, if some foreign substance, such as lint or dust, should fill up one of these recesses,



Showing effect on stamp when a letter of the printing die fills up with lint or foreign substance. Letter "U" of "United" has disappeared. When operator cleans die the "V" will again appear on all stamps printed from this die.

that particular portion of the die would receive ink and the resulting stamp would be minus a letter or so. Hence we find some envelope stamps on which the letter "U" of "United" is completely missing. Such missing letters are the result of the die becoming clogged at this point. All succeeding stamps printed from this die in this condition will continue to show the missing letter until the stoppage in the recess either falls out of its own accord or the flaw is noted and the die cleaned. Once cleaned the die will produce perfect stamps. Missing letters such as we have mentioned are much sought after by collectors. The remarkable thing is that so few of them turn up, for the machines making envelopes pound away at the rate of from eight to ten thousand impressions per hour.

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Naturally enough, also, the forcing of the paper into the crevices of the die will sometimes cause wrinkles and pinches in the paper. Such things are usually ignored by collectors as they are merely characteristic of this method of printing; they are variations that could and do happen at any time without intent or cause.

IN GENERAL

Throughout the stamp catalogs stamps are usually indicated as "Engraved," "Typographed," "Lithographed," "Offset" or "Embossed." All of these terms have been clearly explained but we sum up their meaning to collectors as follows:

"ENGRAVED" — Stamps produced from intaglio plates, usually steel but sometimes copper.

"TYPOGRAPHED" — Any of the methods of letterpress printing.

"LITHOGRAPHED" — Printed either from stones or any of the more modern processes.

"OFFSET" — Printed by the process that offsets the design on the plates to a rubber roll and thence to the paper; a form of lithography.

"EMBOSSSED" — Printed from striking dies which raise the uninked surface of the paper.

Perforations

THE WORLD'S first postage stamps, issued by Great Britain in 1840, were without means of self-separation. They are called "imperforate" or, abbreviated, "imperf." Such stamps had to be cut apart with scissors or some other means. Hence it is unusual to find "imperf." stamps with nice margins on all four sides.

Shortly after the first stamps were issued, the idea of separating each stamp from the other by means of rows of small holes between the rows of stamps was introduced. The story, probably apocryphal, is told that a ne'er-do-well had purchased some of England's first stamps and, under the influence of drink, sat on the curb where he produced a pin and began to poke pin holes between his stamps so that he could tear them apart. The idea worked so well that he took his stamps back to the Post Office and pointed out his great discovery. Later, it is related, the British Government provided this gentleman with a substantial sum of money for his invention. There seems to be some evidence that something of this nature

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actually took place. But, whether or no, the fact remains that after the first few issues of postage stamps had made their appearance without perforations, the rows of holes became almost universally accepted as a necessary part of a postage stamp.

There is, of course, a very apparent difference between a stamp without perforations—"imperf."—and one with perforations—"perf."—and one can readily understand why early collectors made such an important point of that difference. However, in this day of collecting it is somewhat difficult to understand why so much emphasis is placed on the different gauges of perforation (*see page 71*). The fact remains that for United States stamps, which have been perforated by machines producing various gauges of perforations, there is often an enormous difference in value running from a few cents to as much as several hundred dollars for what, to all intents and purposes, is the identical stamp except for the gauge of the perforation.

The same situation applies to most foreign issues but until the advent of "The New World-Wide Postage Stamp Catalog" few collectors in the United States were aware of this fact. "The New World-Wide Postage Stamp Catalog" lists and gives values for practically all perforation varieties of all stamps of the world. In this, as well as in many other respects, "The New World-Wide Postage Stamp Catalog" has greatly advanced our knowledge of foreign stamps.

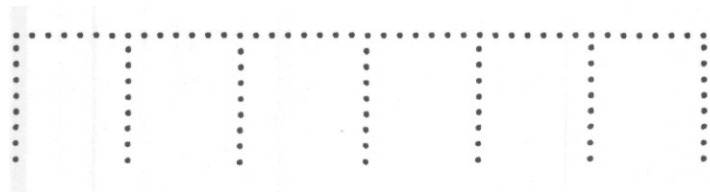
Likewise the printed albums—those which provide spaces in which to place each stamp—seldom bother with perforation varieties even for the stamps of the United States.

PERFORATIONS

The matter is important, however, and especially so as one becomes advanced in his or her collecting interests.

We have already seen in Chapter 8 how perforations are identified or measured. Now let us take into consideration the various kinds of perforations and the methods by which they are applied to stamps.

The original perforating machine, one that is still in common use for the stamps of some countries, is the "comb" perforator. As the name implies, this is an instrument shaped like a comb. The pins that do the perforating are arranged in a long row to fit the width of the sheet of stamps and the extensions of shorter rows of prongs are arranged so as to fall between each stamp, like this:



Comb perforation.

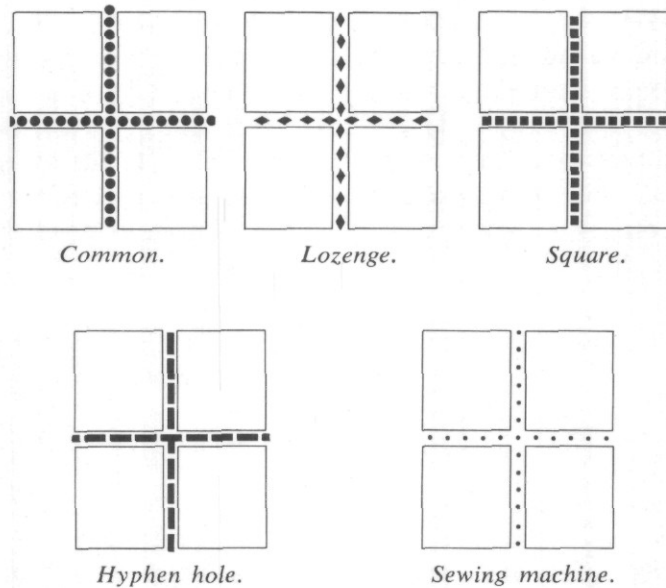
Stamps in sheets are stacked in quantity and the comb is punched through the top row. Then the comb is moved to the next row and so on. The comb does not always line up exactly with the preceding row so that this style of perforation can often be identified in any vertical pair of stamps. However, it has never come to our attention that these variations in the placement of the comb have received any important consideration among collectors.

Usually the punches, or prongs, that make the perforations are round in shape. They need not be, however,

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and sometimes they are oblong, or lozenge, in shape or perhaps some other shape. Collectors refer to these odd shapes as "hyphen hole" perfs., or "Lozenge" perfs., and "square" perfs.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PERFORATIONS



Modern perforating machines, as used in the production of United States stamps, are sprocket wheel punches which punch continuous rows of holes between the stamps. When the stamps are produced on rotary presses in a continuous strip, the sprockets are small wheels that make a continuous row of perforations in one direction. Then, a little further along on the machine, the sprockets are on a long shaft running the complete width of the

PERFORATIONS

sheet to produce the cross row of perforations at each turn of the wheel. Naturally this is a complicated device requiring careful coordination with the printed stamps so that the rows of holes will fall at exactly the correct place between the stamps. Nowadays this coordination is accomplished electrically by what collectors call the "electric eye" (*see page 148*).

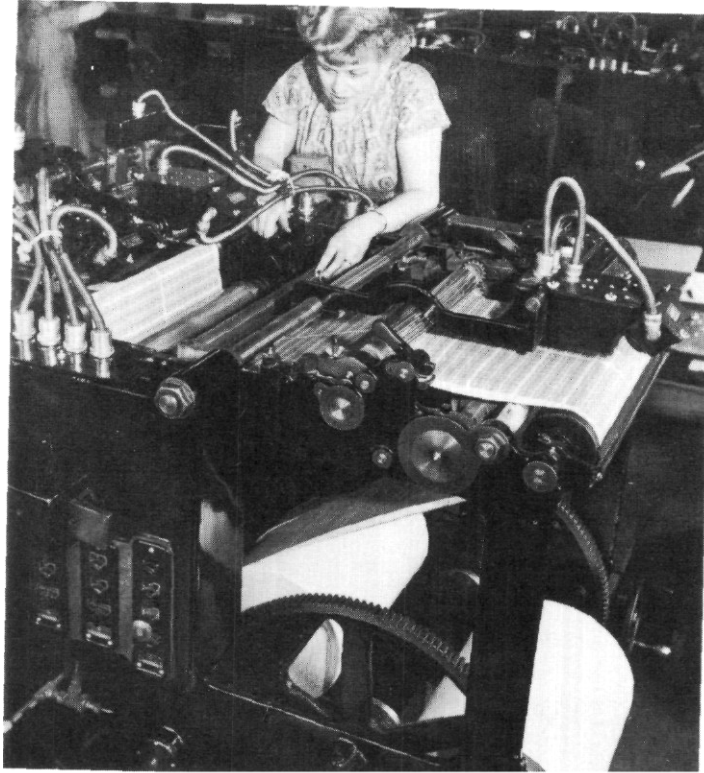


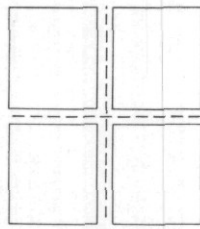
Photo by Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Electric eye perforator.

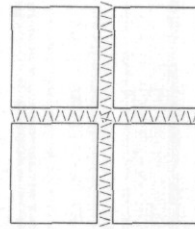
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All true perforations actually remove some of the paper and leave holes. (Incidentally, these tiny pieces of paper that are removed from the stamps produced in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, D. C, amount to many tons of waste a year and are sold as such at a good profit to the Government.) When no paper is actually removed, but, instead, slits or pricks in the paper are made, they are referred to by collectors as "roulettes." Roulettes are made in a variety of shapes running from plain slits to arcs and serpentine shapes. All have names to collectors and all are easily identifiable as the names describe the shapes. Roulettes may be measured the same as perforations.

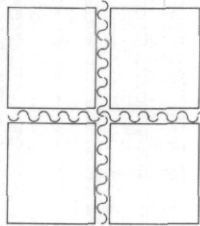
ROULETTES.



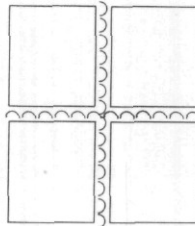
Line.



Serrate.



Serpentine.



Perce en arc.

Condition

CONDITION IS A factor that has a direct, and considerable bearing upon the value of your stamps. Reduced to its simplest terms, a stamp that is torn in half would not be worth as much as the same stamp in perfect condition. It doesn't take an expert to recognize that. But "condition" in philately carries far greater connotations.

Basically, collectors prefer that their stamps be in choice condition. Unused stamps should have the gum intact, the design of the stamp should be well centered, leaving even margins on all sides between the design and the perforations, and the perforations themselves should be without blemish and with no teeth missing.

Used stamps must, likewise, be in the same perfect condition. Absence of the gum is, of course, expected on the used stamp. Cancellations must be very light and preferably centered exactly upon the stamp. This is called "socked on the nose" by collectors.

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"Socked on the nose."

I have described the ultimate in condition demanded by collectors. For modern stamps, such perfection is not too hard to obtain in individual stamps. However, it is far from possible to obtain such super-fine stamps of the nineteenth century. For such stamps "condition" has a different meaning. Perfection is, of course, always sought after but is seldom obtained when we deal with the nineteenth-century issues, and the older the issue the less we are able to approach perfection. Hence, for unused nineteenth-century stamps original gum is not expected but, if present, it fetches a considerable premium. The best possible centering of the design is required for a stamp to be in "very fine" condition, but "very fine" as a description has an entirely different meaning for an early nineteenth-century stamp than when applied to a modern issue.

Certain general rules apply to all stamps and these are what anyone would normally expect. Any stamp that is torn or otherwise damaged would not be acceptable to anyone. A used stamp that is so heavily canceled as to block out the design of the stamp would likewise be unacceptable.

CONDITION



Well centered.



Off center.



Perforation torn.

In referring to the stamps they offer, auction dealers use the following terms that have become more or less generally understood.

"SUPERB" — A term used very sparingly to describe a nineteenth-century stamp of unusual brilliance and over-all condition. This should never be used to describe a modern stamp and should only be used to describe a stamp which is of outstanding condition.

"VERY FINE" — Used to describe both nineteenth- and twentieth-century stamps when the condition is above the average. Such a stamp may be expected to be out of the ordinary.

"FINE" — Used to describe both nineteenth- and twentieth-century stamps that are in all respects "up to par."

"FAIR" — Used to describe both nineteenth- and twentieth-century stamps that are neither "fine" nor actually poor.

"POOR" — Stamps that are damaged, heavily canceled, or "shop worn." Only otherwise very valuable stamps would be offered at auction in "poor" condition. Collectors sometimes wish them as "space fillers" — to fill a space in their albums until a better copy may be secured.

In addition, there are various other descriptive terms. "Average" means somewhat the same as "fair." "Mint" means an unused stamp with full original gum as it was issued, *i.e.* in the condition that it left the mint. In the case of stamps, of course, the mint is the Bureau of Engraving and Printing or the manufacturer of the stamps.

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The spread in value between a stamp in "very fine" condition and the same stamp in "poor" condition is quite startling. The first might be well worth ten dollars and the latter only fifty cents. Expressed in terms of "catalog" value such a stamp might shape up somewhat as follows in actual value, i.e. what it would cost you to acquire it.

CATALOG VALUE	\$8.00
"VERY FINE"	10.00
"FINE"	7.50
"FAIR"	5.00
"POOR"50

Condition is a factor that will become ever more important as the tyro advances. The beginner should keep it in mind and should place in his collection only stamps that are clean and sound in other respects. It is not desirable to demand that every stamp must be mathematically centered. Many stamps may never be obtained in this condition and even the very modern issues may not always be so obtained. If we should eliminate all stamps that were centered a little to the right or left, stamp collecting would not be possible at all. However, a modern stamp that is so badly off center as to have the perforations running through the design need not be accepted and you will not be required to do so.

Remember you are collecting stamps for pleasure. This is your hobby. Do not let condition become such a fetish with you that all pleasure has flown out of the window.

Cancellations



REPOSING UNDER the glass top of a stamp dealer's counter was a "cover" bearing an ordinary three-cent stamp issued by the United States in 1869. Almost every collector will at once know the stamp we are talking about—it is ultramarine in color and bears a picture of an old-time locomotive.

Such a stamp in itself is not valuable. One may be purchased in used condition for as little as fifty cents — perhaps even less.

This particular stamp was unusual because it had been canceled by a picture of a running chicken. Such fancy cancellations were made by postal clerks who had time on their hands to fashion on the ends of bottle corks various designs with which to cancel the mail passing through their hands. Collectors greatly prize these fancy cancellations, and the cover in the dealer's counter was priced at \$10.00—a high price without doubt and the cover remained under the counter for many months be-

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fore anyone would buy it. Eventually it was sold to someone who really wanted it. A few years later this very same cover was put up at auction and fetched an amazing price—over one thousand dollars!



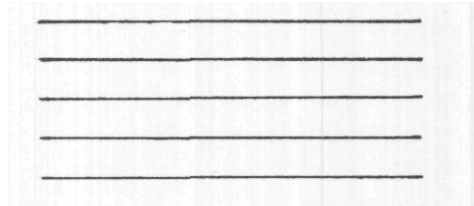
"Running chicken."

A most unusual case, to be sure, but one that points up the importance of cancellations that appear on stamps.

Let's look them over and see what it is all about.

To begin with, there are usually two marks placed on a letter by the Post Office Department: the postmark, which identifies the town of origin, the day of the month, the year, and even the time of mailing; and, the cancellation, which is the device that renders the stamp attached to the envelope of no further franking value.

Modern postmarks and cancellations look like this



Modern cancellation.

CANCELLATIONS

From the beginning of the use of postage stamps in this country in 1847 and for sometime before—the "stampless cover" period—the postmark portion of the canceling device has been almost always of circular shape. Sometimes the postmark and the canceling device were ganged together in one instrument. Sometimes they were two separate instruments. Sometimes, for convenience, postal clerks would bind the two instruments together. In any event the general idea has been that the postmark should fall somewhere on the envelope so as to be readable. Often the clerks would make the postmark perform the double duty of canceling the stamp and serving as a postmark. Often early nineteenth-century postmarks contained only the name of the town and the abbreviation for the State. And, as we have seen, some postmasters cut fancy designs upon corks to "kill" the stamps. Such devices, whether of specific design or only the circular ends of the corks, are called "killers." Only fancy-shaped killers are prized by collectors.

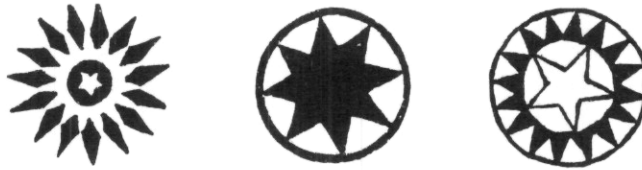


Odd cancellations.

Early United States stamps bearing postmarks—often called "town" cancellations—with year dates are scarce and much sought after. In fact, any unusual cancellation on a stamp is a collectable item.

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In addition to the postmark and the killer the Post Office often used other marks upon stamps and letters which are of interest to collectors. The stamps on all foreign addressed mail that passed through the New York Post Office from 1871 to 1877 were canceled with a killer in the shape of fancy stars and designed usually in a circle. There are about one hundred different types of these New York foreign mail killers and all are eagerly sought after.



New York foreign mail cancellations.

Still other markings have been applied to stamps or letters to indicate special handling by the Post Office Department. Thus a small rectangle inclosing the words "Supplementary Mail" or the same words with a circular "town" postmark indicated that an extra fee had been paid by the sender to get the letter aboard an outgoing ship after the regular mail had closed. Letters carried on the Mississippi River packet boats often were canceled with the name of the steamer or perhaps merely "WAY"—indicating the letter had been picked up along the way—or "SHIP" or "STEAM." Letters carried by stage-coaches carry cancellations of the "Central Overland, California & Pike's Peak Express" and others. "Pony Ex-

CANCELLATIONS

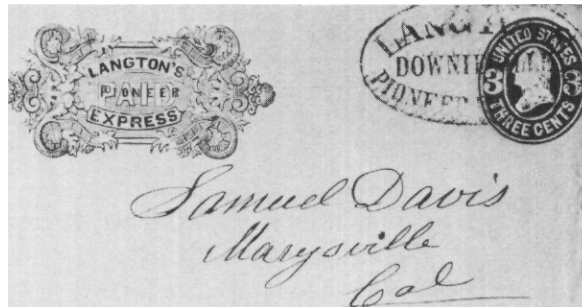
press" cancellations often feature a running pony and sometimes private carriers would apply markings, one of the most famous of the latter being the "Noisy Carrier" of San Francisco.



Steamboat postmarks.



Pony express.



Cover carried by Langton's Pioneer Express, one of the early express companies operating in California about 1865. There were many of these express companies who carried mail, most famous of which would be Wells, Fargo, & Co. The company "franks," usually printed at upper left are greatly prized by collectors when on covers properly used and cancelled. Such covers were often carried completely outside of the mail being handled entirely by the express companies.

Other stamps have been killed with the letters "N," "S," "E" or "W," indicating to the postal clerks in which direction the letter was to travel.

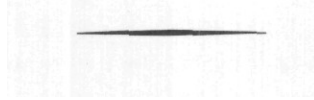
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All of these things contribute to the interest and value of stamps and letters. Indeed, no stamp should ever be removed from its original letter where anything in the way of a cancellation or postmark occurs either upon the stamp or the envelope itself. Some stamps are more valuable "on cover," that is, attached to the letters on which they were mailed. This is especially true of some of the higher denomination stamps of the nineteenth century. But the cover collector will demand that the stamp be "tied," that is, that the postmark or cancellation must cover part of the envelope and part of the stamp, both under the same mark, thus "tying" the stamp to the cover.

Among our modern stamps, which are mostly canceled by machines, it is very unusual to find the postmark itself upon the stamp because the machine is set up so that the postmark will fall some distance to the left of where the stamp is usually placed. Hence collectors seek to obtain such postmarks, especially on commemorative stamps, by placing the stamp far to the left on the envelope. When this is done "just so" and the envelope is fed into the machine "just right," the postmark will fall exactly in the center of the stamp. Such cancellations are called by collectors "socked on the nose" and not a few philatelists make a specialty of such postmarks.

The subject of postmarks and cancellations is in itself a very broad field of collecting and research. In a very general way we have tried here merely to indicate just what to look for. Summed up, the whole idea may be wrapped up into a very few words: when looking for cancellations and postmarks it's the unusual that counts.

Is Stamp Collecting an Investment?



THROUGHOUT THE PAGES in this book you have read much about one stamp being more valuable than another. It has been pointed out that the various tools described are needed to identify a less valuable stamp from one of more value and that it is necessary to know the fundamentals of printing, of paper making, and many other things in order to identify each individual stamp. We have indicated that a youngster found a stamp of great value in a cheap packet of stamps, that another collector purchased a stamp for ten dollars that later was to bring over one thousand dollars at public auction. We have recounted various finds made by lucky people in the past and have indicated that such luck may also be your own if you know what to look for.

All of this is true.

No one may gainsay that the search for a treasure trove is exciting or that this search has considerable opportunity for fulfilment in philately. Everyone, at one time or another in his collecting activity, makes a find

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO STAMP COLLECTING

that thrills him. Such a find may not be large but nevertheless the thrill will be present and the satisfaction of the moment will be great. Nor can anyone hold forth in truth that the monetary value of a collection is not of considerable interest and concern to the individual collector. Indeed this whole book has been concerned with revealing the secrets of philately so that you may not be led astray or induced to spend your money unwisely.

Nevertheless, is the collecting of stamps an investment?"

Let us not be misled by wild and unfounded claims. It is pleasing to reflect that if we had bought a couple of sheets of the Norse American stamps when they were first issued in 1925 our investment of seven dollars would today be worth several hundred dollars. Just as it is pleasing to reflect that had we purchased some of the common stock of some of our large corporations when they were selling for a "mere song," we could today reap a fortune. But this is hindsight, a daydream we indulge in to idle away a few moments — not one to which we attach serious importance.

Stamps as an investment might be likened to unimproved real estate. So long as real estate remains unimproved it will not increase in value and will, in fact, eventually eat its head off in taxes. The true investor must consider what the interest will amount to on the money he ties up. If, as is forcibly presented by the proponents of "buy stamps for investment," it becomes necessary to hold those stamps for a "waiting period" of from ten to fifteen years before any appreciation takes place, the interest on the money invested may well eat up any profit we might hope to make.

IS STAMP COLLECTING AN INVESTMENT?

Like unimproved real estate, if we guess right we may make a profit but we shall have to wait many a year to find out.

The plain fact of the matter is that, from a purely financial standpoint, stamps are not an investment in any real sense of the word. They may present some of the elements of speculation, which consists of buying stamps that presently have a collector's value—*i.e.* worth to collectors more than their "face" value—but which you think are priced too low. Certainly it is not an exciting speculation to purchase unused stamps at the Post Office and wait ten or more years in the hops that you have guessed right.

The proponents of the "buy stamps and retire on the profits you will make" are great shakes at pointing out that the Ferrari collection sold for some two million dollars, that the Hind collection brought a million dollars during the world's worst depression, and that other great collections have been sold for large sums of money.

The most recent incident of this nature to come to the attention of the general public has been the sale of the collection formed by the late Alfred Caspary. The "Caspary" sales just concluded realized a total of some two million eight hundred thousand dollars.

It is interesting to note that none of the three "greats" mentioned—Ferrari, Hind and Caspary—ever purchased sheets of current stamps at the Post Office and waited for them to increase in value. All three purchased the world's great rarities and often paid record prices for their acquisitions.

The truth is that these collections were of great value to begin with. We have no way of knowing how much

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a rich man may have spent for his collection. There are sometimes records available from which we learn that "so and so" bought certain stamps for so much, which brought ten times as much when his collection was sold. I have never learned of an estate claiming a profit over cost of a collection that was sold. *

It would be next to impossible to ascertain whether a profit had been made or lost because there is very little evidence to determine what the stamps may have cost the owner in the first place.

Stamps, admittedly, have a very high salvage value. This value is often far greater than for stocks, bonds, or other financial investments which upon the demise of the owner may have to be sold when the stock market is temporarily depressed. The salvage value of stamps is not affected by such fluctuations and may often exceed the actual cost, especially in collections that have developed a new field of collecting interest.

Because of the large auction market and the great number of professionals eager and financially able to acquire worth-while collections to almost any value, the collector can realize this salvage value rather quickly, just as quickly, in fact, as he could sell his stocks or bonds. This situation gives the collector a sense of security that might well be lacking were not such excellent facilities at his command.

*An exception would be the collection of the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Collectors and friends paid enormous prices when this collection was sold at auction. In fact, the collection brought more than twice its appraised valuation. However, this was not the philatelic value of the stamps going under the hammer; this was an abnormal personal value which the buyers attached to anything once owned by the late President.

IS STAMP COLLECTING AN INVESTMENT?

I venture to say that no collector of great art ever considered his purchases an investment, although he surely knows that the painting he purchases today will have a substantial salvage value tomorrow. Without, such assurance he would never acquire the painting.

But if you ask me what then is the "value" of stamp collecting, I have a very good answer.

First, we collect stamps for the very simple reason that all people of intelligence delight in surrounding themselves with the fine and the cultural things of life. The mere ownership of something fine and rare is a great source of satisfaction in itself. This pleasure is expressed in many ways by different persons. Some find delight in collecting antique furniture, fine china, glass, pewter and other things that either are in themselves works of art or have historical significance. Others fill their homes with paintings, etchings, fine books, autographs, and similar things indicative of the culture of our civilization. Each in his own way and according to his own tastes collects that thing in which he finds interest. If we found no more than this in stamp collecting, we should be completely satisfied. But there is much more.

Collecting stamps, as with every other hobby ever devised, is a mechanism of escape, one of those things in life in which we find genuine pleasure. Only the miser piles up "the golden grain" for the sake of the money itself. Only the hermit prefers to live in solitude apart from his fellow man. The rest of us look upon money as a means of providing us with something in which we find pleasure, something that will take us out of our self-imposed routine of life and make us forget for the while the travail of mere existence. The collecting of stamps is

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one of the most satisfying of all avocations. It provides us with a whole new world to explore. It satisfies the yearning for knowledge of faraway places. It stimulates our interest in myriad subjects of history and technology which would not be available to us otherwise. No one sits down to read an encyclopedia for it is a reference book to be consulted when we wish to know a particular thing. Stamp collecting constantly pricks our curiosity and sends us scurrying through the pages of many reference books. Stamp collecting provides us with the wonder of the unusual, the thrill of the unknown. It takes us to the farthest corners of the earth and even beyond into the universe itself—for many stamps of the world picture various constellations. And stamp collecting brings us into close relationship with our neighbors, next door, in a distant city, or in a remote country. It provides us a common ground where we meet on equal basis people whom we should never know by any other means. It satisfies our urge to learn, to own, and to elevate ourselves to a higher plane of existence.

Stamp collecting does all of these things and, in the end, we can sell our treasures and salvage in return a considerable portion of the money we have expended. In our stamp collections we may leave to our loved ones the rich legacy of a satisfying life, with a substantial monetary value. We have eaten our cake and we can have it, too.

I know of no other avocation that offers these things in so rich a proportion.

Is stamp collecting an investment? The answer depends upon what you are looking for.

*The Social Aspects of
Stamp Collecting*

BY AND LARGE Homo sapiens is a social creature. He builds his home in close proximity to others, he likes to mingle in crowds, to eat and be entertained in public places surrounded by others, and, above all, he longs for the companionship of others.

Yet he can not attain his longing merely by attending public gatherings.

He must find something in his life in which others, also, are interested. There must be a common denominator between humans to release the inhibitions and form the basis for a true meeting of minds.

Stamp collecting is a very potent such common denominator.

This social aspect of the hobby is one of its greatest attributes. It is not merely taking part in a mass demonstration such as, for instance, attending a baseball game with thousands of other people similarly interested. Or in

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attending the theater to enjoy a play surrounded by hundreds of others partaking of similar enjoyment. Such activities are pleasing and beneficial. But unless one can discuss the game or the play the experience is largely negative. A considerable part of the enjoyment of the game will have been lost unless you can find someone else who also was a witness. Then the two of you can, and will, relive the experience.

Stamp collecting is a pleasure in which you participate, and an experience which you will share with other collectors wherever you meet. It is, in fact, an *open sesame* to companionship and lifetime friendship with people of importance almost everywhere in the world. Your own position in the scheme of life is of no consequence. A paper hanger, because of his great interest in his stamps, was recently elected president of a stamp society whose members were largely high-powered executives in the financial world. The stamps had given the paper hanger a common ground of interest with interesting people whom he could never have met by any other means. The relationship was, of course, a two-way affair. The executives likewise had met through their hobby a person whom they would never have had the pleasure of knowing except through their collecting activities. Strangely enough they had found each other to be sound and interesting fellows worth while knowing.

This cutting across the lines of the "social classes" is widespread throughout the world of stamp collecting. The doors of the most "exclusive" stamp societies are wide open to everyone genuinely interested in collecting stamps. They are exclusive only in that to become a member one must possess the ordinary attributes of

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF STAMP COLLECTING

conducting oneself as a gentleman. I know of no stamp club in this country that bars membership to anyone of any race, creed, or color, nor do I believe that there are many philatelic societies anywhere in the world that make any such distinctions. This is not something widely publicized or boasted of. It is just a natural part of stamp collecting as a hobby that has always been so. In this respect stamp collecting is one of the great forces in the world that, in combination with other such universal activities, will eventually bring about peace and understanding among all the nations.

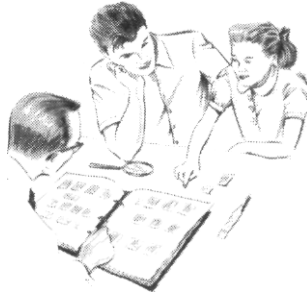
A stamp collectors' clambake in Rhode Island brings together several hundred people from a dozen or more states. An exhibition in Honolulu sends collectors traveling across the continent to be among those present, while one of the great international stamp shows staged in New York, London, Paris or elsewhere will have in attendance collectors from all parts of the earth.

At such gatherings a great opera star becomes friends with an insurance clerk; a millionaire executive consults a news vendor; a cardinal talks stamps with an interested bystander. Lasting friendships are born among people whose walks of life are far removed from each other but who have in their stamps found a kindred interest and a common denominator. The hobby is indeed one of the greatest democratic societies in all the world.

Just how much ordinary business is conducted via an introduction by way of stamp collecting is beyond telling. But most certainly every salesman knows that he cannot sell anything unless he first can meet his prospective client on some common ground. If you have something to

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sell and your prospective client is "difficult," find out if he is a stamp collector. If he is, your course is clearly indicated. Become a collector yourself. Don't try to bluff it. Get right into it and become a dyed-in-the-wool enthusiast. Your reward will be twofold. You will have found one of the world's most engaging hobbies and your difficult client will soon seek you out.



The Advanced Collection

EVENTUALLY you will wish to build a truly advanced collection — one worthy of exhibition in the greatest of stamp shows. This does not necessarily require a large outlay of money. It does require considerable research to the point where you know as much as — preferably more than — anyone else about the stamps you collect.

When this time comes in your collecting life, you will have reached "adulthood." Now there will be no need for instructions from myself. Indeed you will, in all probability, be able to show the way and we shall follow. But, perhaps, a few words from me will not be amiss to guide you with your first try for an award.

The album you will use will be the blank album — of course loose-leaf. The stamps you display must be in the finest possible condition and mounted in strictest regard to the chronological dates of their issue. This order of things may only be broken when you desire to display a particular feature that has some definite bearing on what you are trying to establish.

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Your collection must be written up; that is, the pages must contain notes indicating the stamps that are shown and pointing out any particular varieties to which you wish to call attention. It is in the write-up that many an otherwise fine collection has failed to be appreciated by the judges. The write-up must be confined to terse notes: a date of issue, an arrow pointing to a particular spot on the stamp with perhaps the briefest notation of what the arrow indicates — for instance, "Double transfer" — there is no need to say more. It is the stamps that must tell the story, not long wordy descriptions. Presumably the judges are well qualified to understand your collection, so the write-up need only be a guide for them to follow.

A good parallel to what is and is not good in the way of writing up a collection for exhibition may be had on any principal highway in the United States. When a curve is coming up, a sign will simply warn "Curve" and with an arrow indicate the direction. When another route intersects, we are advised accordingly. Every motorist can follow such signs with the greatest of ease. But sprinkled along many highways there are wordy signs pointing out spots of historical interest. Hence, as we roll along we catch a glimpse of a sign the first words of which catch our eye: "On this spot. . ." it will say but we have passed. We never know, or care, what took place "On this spot . . ." We have no time to stop and we are not interested anyhow for, in all probability, it is a subject we know about. So let it be with the collection you wish to exhibit. Point out the "curves" and "intersections." Leave out the lengthy descriptions that start "On this spot . . ." The judge will not pause to read them and if there be too much of this sort of thing he will become disgusted

THE ADVANCED COLLECTION

and pass on to the next, better annotated exhibit.

This is not to say that you may not point out some extremely important matter. Perhaps a description will be required but, if so, let it be terse and concise.

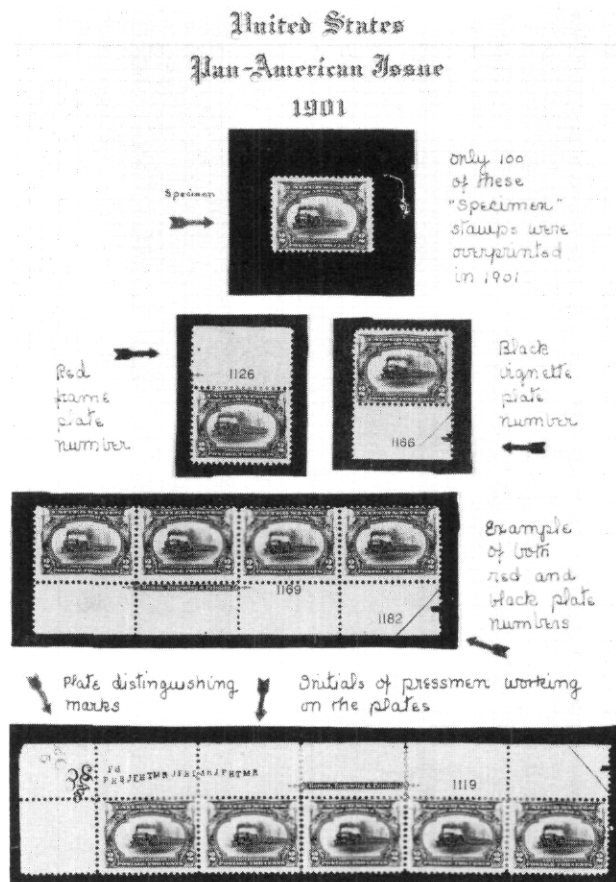
As to the type of lettering that you use for your write-up, adopt a clear clean form of letter without frills and of sufficient size to be readable without the aid of a magnifying glass. The so-called "copperplate" style of script is very good if you can handle it. Many people use special lettering guides that produce a perfectly plain letter without serifs or other ornamentation. If you cannot handle any form of hand lettering, the good old typewriter is a very serviceable and very suitable instrument to fall back upon.

Elaborate colored borders around your album pages may be very beautiful — indeed, they may be actual works of art — but such ornamentation is not stamps and you are entering an exhibit of stamps in competition with other exhibits of stamps. Ornamentation is a difficult subject to handle and most often detracts from the stamps on display. Under no circumstances should any ornamentation of the pages be of such nature as to make the stamps of secondary importance.

A frontispiece to introduce your collection is permissible but, however attractive, will have little bearing on the judges' decision.

These observations are made as the result of many years of experience with stamp exhibitions of all kinds as layman and as judge. The person who would have his stamp collection judged in competition must first, last, and always exhibit STAMPS. All else is secondary.

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Page from a grand-prize winning collection. This page is part of a collection that won gold medals for Mrs. Ethel B. McCoy. Note concise explanations on page.

Treasure Trove

THE CLASSIC STORIES of the fabulous stamps of philately have been told so many times that to recount them here would be repetitious and boring. The Post Office "Mauritius," the Hawaiian "Missionaries," the "24-cent inverted airmail," the "Hawker," the "Pinedo" and all of the others have become legendary and are as much a part of stamp collecting as are stamps themselves. The stories of the creation or discovery of these great rarities are fascinating but to our present generation they are rather "corny." All of them occurred many years ago and, while it is true that they could happen again, such a possibility is rather farfetched. Surely every stamp collector should know about such stamps; in fact he will have difficulty in not hearing these classics extolled. But if we pin our hopes on finding the greatest treasures only, we will almost certainly be courting disappointment.

At the turn of the century thousands of collectors were scurrying through old attics and other likely places in

TREASURE TROVE

Believing this to be so and determined to uncover some such great treasure, an enterprising professional, not long ago, contrived a story of philatelic treasure that was published in one of the larger magazines with national circulation. It was announced that this man would gladly examine any stamps anyone might wish to send him and that he would inform them of the value of such stamps. As might be expected, this fellow's office was literally swamped with letters and packages from all over the nation. Thousands upon thousands of persons wrote in and sent stamps hopeful that theirs would "hit the jackpot." So many packages were received that help was required to open and examine them all and for months collectors and professionals dropped in to help in the search for the "great find." Surely among this great mass of letters and old documents there must be something of



*Twenty-four-cent inverted
air-mail.*

great value. Yet when the job was finally completed, the last letter opened and the writer advised, this man's great treasure hunt had turned up exactly nothing! Dame Fortune was not to be forced to reveal her treasures!

How then is one to find anything "good"? Where must one look?

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First, of course, one must know gold when he sees it.

Next, the most likely place to make a "strike" is where there is a "showing." Any prospector or wildcatter will tell you that.

In stamps the most obvious "showing" is wherever stamps are concentrated. At stamp exhibitions, club meetings, or, best of all, where stamps are sold! Yes, the stamp dealer's shop is the place to "prospect" if you are in search of treasure. Every important stamp has entered philately by way of a stamp dealer and the initial sales price has usually been but a small fraction of what the stamp was later to realize.

An example of this process, one well known and not too ancient to prove our point, is the case of the 24-cent inverted airmail stamp issued by the United States in 1918. The sheet of one hundred with inverted centers was purchased at face value at the Post Office by W. T. Robey. They cost him exactly twenty-four dollars. Within a few weeks he sold this sheet of stamps to the late Eugene Klein, a dealer in Philadelphia. Mr. Klein is reported to have paid \$15,000, or at the rate of \$150 per stamp. Mr. Klein sold the sheet of stamps to the late Colonel E. H. R. Green reportedly for the huge sum of \$20,000, which is \$200 per stamp. Colonel Green broke up the sheet, retained the blocks he wished and made the others available at \$250 per stamp. Thus these stamps were now "in the market"; they were available to collectors. The price of a single stamp from this sheet rapidly advanced as they changed hands. In recent years a single copy has been offered for \$7000. The \$200 per stamp which had been changed on the initial sale from dealer to collector had increased twenty times. The origi-

TREASURE TROVE

nal sheet of one hundred stamps now has a potential value of over \$400,000.



Two-cent inverted Pan American stamp.

The rare two-cent Pan-American stamp with inverted center was at one time sold by stamp dealers on Nassau Street for only \$5.00 a stamp. Presently one is worth about \$2500!



One-cent British Guiana, the rarest stamp in the world.

The rarest stamp of all, the one-cent magenta British Guiana was originally sold by dealer Ridpath to a collector—the initial sale from dealer to collector—for £ 125 (approximately \$725). The last time this stamp changed hands the price paid was reported as \$50,000!

No stamp dealer, however erudite, can know the value of every stamp that passes through his hands nor, for that matter, where to place every stamp. Hence, his

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stock is the most logical place to locate stamps of potentially great value. Every stamp dealer and every collector takes opportunity to visit the booths of other dealers at stamp exhibitions. Every stamp dealer and collector always finds stamps of value on such visits. Finds big and small are made in this manner with startling regularity. What one man holds in little regard another may recognize as a bonanza. Witness the true story of the late John Meurer, a postal stationery collector of note.

Meurer did not always have the wide knowledge of United States stamped envelopes which he was eventually to attain. In fact, this one incident started him off on specializing in envelopes. As related to me by Meurer himself, it happened this way. He was browsing through the miscellaneous box of covers that almost all dealers leave on their counters for the amusement of clients waiting for attention. Such boxes never contain anything rare or valuable — just miscellaneous material priced at a few cents and up. Meurer was doing the usual thing, just idly looking through such a lot, when he came across a United States stamped envelope which struck his eye. It looked as though it might be one of the rare dies. Meurer wasn't sure so he asked the dealer. The dealer said no. Still intrigued Meurer said he wasn't sure but he would buy it anyway. How much? Five cents! The stamp panned out. It was indeed the rare die and Meurer sold it for \$150. Then he decided to become a specialist in United States envelopes. Meurer never found another of these envelopes; nor has any one else. Research disclosed that no other entire has ever been known in the philatelic world.

That envelope reposed for a few years in the collection of Louis H. Barkhausen. This was the greatest col-

TREASURE TROVE

lection of United States postal stationery ever formed. When sold by the author in 1954, Meurer himself attended the sale and watched the envelope he had purchased a few years before — from a stamp dealer's box of miscellany for five cents — bring the record price of \$2900.00.

A more recent incident of treasure trove took place in 1957 when a mild mannered gentleman visited my booth at a stamp exhibition and produced two envelopes issued to commemorate the Bi-centennial of George Washington celebrated in 1932. Such envelopes are quite common — worth a few cents each. But the thing which made the two envelopes this gentleman presented so remarkable was that they were printed on blue paper. No such blue paper Bi-centennial envelopes had heretofore been known — and this although some 25 years had passed since the envelopes had been issued. Where had these two blue envelopes been all of these years? The gentleman explained that he had found them in a box of ordinary white paper envelopes and had kept them all of these years wondering if they had any value. Now, he had reached retirement age and wondered if they did have a value could they be sold? They most certainly did have a value. After careful research to determine the possibility of more having been made, I was convinced that these two blue paper envelopes were an error. Two blue envelope blanks had inadvertently become mixed with the white paper blanks of which the Bi-centennial envelopes were being made. When sold a few months later the two envelopes brought the tidy sum of \$2650.00 each.

Every collector has some stamps or covers that he

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"picked up for a song" at some dealer's store or booth at an exhibition. Whether or not their cost was, in truth, "a song" will depend upon what they might be sold for at some later date. The collector who acquired them is happy with his find, has backed his belief by acquiring the stamps, and, in all probability, has in fact made a find.

This search for treasure, with the ever-present chance of discovering it, is one of the greatest pleasures of stamp collecting. It can happen to you today, tomorrow or the next day. You have only to know what you are looking for and you will most certainly find it.

This book has indicated the way. From here on, it's up to you. Adventure beckons and you are ready to start.

Welcome to the ranks of Philately!



Stamp Societies



THERE are so many stamp clubs located in cities and towns throughout the United States that it would not be possible to list them all in this book. Certainly there must be one located near every large city. We list here the principal National societies. Information about membership may be had by writing to the addresses given.

The American Philatelic Society. National society holding conventions in various cities each year. Publish a monthly magazine circulated to members. Executive Secretary, Box 800, State College, Pennsylvania.

Society of Philatelic Americans. National society holding annual conventions at various cities. Publish a monthly journal circulated to members. S. P. A., Room 1611, 11 S. Lasalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.

National Federation of Stamp Clubs. A clearing house for philatelic matters. Members are stamp clubs throughout the country. The Federation polls its club members at regular intervals to determine philatelic opinion on such matters as proposed new stamp issues for the United States. Membership through joining a member stamp club.

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO STAMP COLLECTING

Association for Stamp Exhibitions. A non-profit association of collectors and dealers for the purpose of staging International Philatelic Exhibitions in the United States. Such events take place once every ten years. In the interim the A. S. E. assists in staging local and regional exhibitions. Membership open to anyone. The Secretary, Association for Stamp Exhibitions, 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y.

The Collector's Club (TV. Y.). While this club is specifically located in New York its membership is worldwide. It owns its own building, maintains the largest philatelic library in the world, and publishes a magazine six times a year, circulated to its members. Secretary, Collector's Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y.

Essay Proof Society. A national society with local chapters at New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Tulsa. Holds annual convention and meetings of the chapters each month. Publishes a quarterly magazine devoted to the study of essays and proofs of the stamps of the world.

United Postal Stationery Society. A national society concerned with the postal stationery of the world. Publishes a monthly journal, *Postal Stationery*, circulated among its members.

American Airmail Society. A national society devoted to the study of airmail stamps. Publishes a monthly magazine circulated among its members, the *American Airmail Catalogue*. Membership open.

Aero Philatelists, Inc. A national society devoted to airmail stamps. Membership open.

Bureau Issues Association. A national society devoted to the study of United States stamps issued by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Publishes a monthly magazine, *The Bureau Specialist*.

STAMPS SOCIETIES

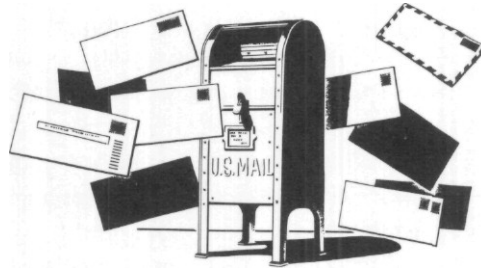
American First Day Cover Society, Inc. A national society. Publishes its own magazine. Membership open.

American Stamp Dealers' Association. A professional organization of stamp dealers (see page 50). Address Executive Secretary, 116 Nassau St., New York, N. Y.

American Topical Association. A national society. Publishes a bi-monthly magazine and handbooks.

Universal Ship Cancellation Society. A national society devoted to Naval Ship cancellations. Publishes bulletin "The Log."

Address of societies where not noted may be obtained from any of the philatelic magazines noted on following pages.



APPENDIX

The Philatelic Press



ONE thing in which philately is especially fortunate beyond most other hobbies is its abundance of literature. There are books, papers, and pamphlets on almost every stamp that has ever been issued. The Collector's Club of New York City boasts a philatelic library of literally thousands of volumes in a great many languages.

In addition to the permanent books and pamphlets the hobby enjoys a living and very active press of its own. This consists of a goodly number of weekly, monthly and quarterly magazines as well as active "Stamp Columns" in the larger newspapers of the larger cities. No collector anywhere in the world, and especially no collector in the United States, need be out of contact with what goes on in the philatelic world. Sad to relate, there are millions who do not bother to subscribe to one or more of these very valuable publications. Every collector should spare the few cents necessary to keep informed of his hobby. We append a list of most of the available periodicals.

THE PHILATELIC PRESS

Linn's Weekly Stamp News, Sidney, Ohio. Newspaper format, issued weekly.

Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News, Portland, Maine. Newspaper format, issued weekly.

National Stamp News, Anderson, So. Car. Newspaper format, issued weekly.

Stamps, 143 Waverly Place, New York, New York. Magazine format, issued weekly.

Weekly Philatelic Gossip, Holton, Kansas. Magazine format, issued weekly.

Western Stamp Collector, Albany, Oregon. Newspaper format, issued twice each week.

American Philatelist, The official organ of the American Philatelic Society. Obtained by membership. Address: P.O. Box 800, State College, Pennsylvania.

Collector's Club Philatelist, Collector's Club, 22 East 35th Street, New York, New York. Six times a year. Official Organ of the Collector's Club.

Essay Proof Journal, Essay Proof Society, 22 East 35th Street, New York, New York. Quarterly. Official Organ of the Essay Proof Society.

Scott's Monthly Journal, Scott Publications, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York 1, New York. Monthly.

S. P. A. Journal, Official Organ of the Society of Philatelic Americans. Monthly. Obtained by membership. Address: S. P. A., Room 1611, 11 S. Lasalle Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.

In addition to these publications, many stamp dealers publish bulletins which are excellent sources of information about the stamps they have for sale.

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