

THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



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THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB

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Membership: Larry Oliver

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WHO TO CALL

If you cannot make a meeting, club event, presentation, or have a question or a suggestion, please contact:

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Asheville Stamp Club meets at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, 1617 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC in the Blue Ridge Room of the Community Center at 1:30 pm on the third Sunday of each month. Bring stamps and covers to sell, trade, or show. There are Nickel Boxes and Envelopes of stamps with new material being added all of the time. The club's 2017 Scott catalogs will be at the meeting; 2012 World Classics, US Specialized. As always, there will be the 50-50 Drawing and Door Prizes.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Moving into Summer and all is well, is how I react to all that is happening within our very active club. Our May monthly meeting probably had the most members attending for a non-auction event meeting since I have been president. Wow...that is just so rewarding!

We continue to add new members at each meeting and hopefully they will gain knowledge from all the "experienced" members within our club who can help them immensely. For all you "new" members, do not be shy! Just ask around and someone WILL help you. That is the educational goal of our club. Many of you may be unaware that we have a ½ dozen members who I rate as "near expert" in their various philately specialties. We are extremely fortunate to have them as members!!

The member presentations (without any arm twisting, I might add ((*_*)) by Herb Estep and Frank Wheeler were well received by all and again demonstrates how much skill and knowledge we have within our membership. Thank you both!

Please do your best to attend any philatelic shows, functions, etc. to support those individuals who volunteer to put those shows on.

Best regards, Robert

ASC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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COLLECTOR DEALER (CIRCLE ONE)

I COLLECT _____

RECOMMENDED BY _____

Please print, fill out and bring to a club meeting with \$10 payable to ASC, or send to Jay Rogers, Secretary ASC, 15 Hickory Court LN, Hendersonville, NC 28792.

SMOKE SIGNALS

I apologize for the late date publication of this issue of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist. I guess I should have planned our trip to France better. Read about my stamp exploration adventure on page 6. It is good to be back in the good ol' USA though, back to real life with its ups and downs, life's ebb and flow. Traveling does add perspective though, and as we get older we hope we are able to travel to many destinations. I hope you have had a good summer and are enjoying it while you are able, as fall will be upon us before you know it, and with it another official stamp season.

I also want to call attention to new member Rich Pederson's excellent article titled Illegal and Improper Uses of Stamps and Cinderellas on Cover. You will find it on page 6. Rich is a dealer from Clemson who operates Pederson Stamps (pedersonstamps.com), and who can be found at our Asheville bourses as well as other regional shows. He is also the editor for the National Stamp Dealers Association (nsdainc.org). You can look forward to more articles from Rich in future issues of the SMP. Thanks for your contributions Rich!

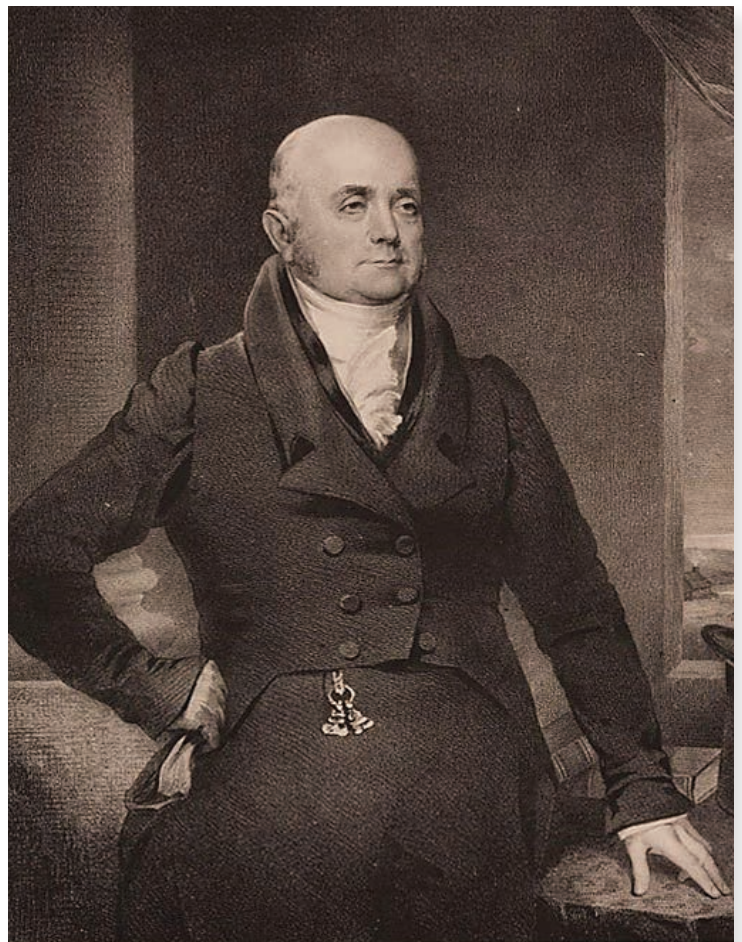
Attention all ASC members! Everyone would like to know more about each of you and your collecting interests. You might tell us about how you got interested in that area of collecting; a favorite cover; what key items of a strong collection should be; different approaches to collecting that country or topic; new finds; national societies you belong to; a favorite new issue; a story behind the stamp or who nurtured your interest; etc. If you have an interesting story of yourself with perhaps some connection to your hobby, please let me know. We will feature your story in a future ASC Newsletter! Please send your own story to randallchet@gmail.com. Thanks!

Email your articles, letters, classified ads, auction items, and comments for the Smoky Mountain Philatelist to Randall Chet: randallchet@gmail.com Deadline for the July-August issue: June 25th

PRESENTATION PREVIEW

The program for the ASC meeting July 15 will be **The Yankee Genius** by Jim Haxby. Jacob Perkins was a brilliant inventor and engineer who was born in America, but spent his later life in London, England. He was the first to adapt steel to bank-note work and was the inventor of the transfer press, the machine that made possible the multiplication of a single device (like a postage stamp) engraved on a block of steel into many copies on a printing plate. Perkins' life and most important contributions relating to bank-note and stamp production, as well as the role of his company, Perkins, Bacon & Petch, in the production of the world's first adhesive postage stamps, will be covered.

Member Dealers: Are you interested in reaching more collectors? Time to take advantage of your free 2.5" x 2" display ad! You editor and designer can even style it for you. It's just one of the benefits available for Asheville Stamp Club members. And if you are reading this but are not yet a member, our membership application can be found on page 2 of this journal. Contact randallchet@gmail.com for your ad.



ILLEGAL AND IMPROPER USES OF STAMPS AND CINDERELLAS ON COVER

Richard Pederson

Occasionally, items make their way through the mail without having been properly paid. Sometimes it is due to ignorance, other times it is the result of an honest mistake and, at times, it is because the sender made a conscious effort to defraud the postal system of revenue. I'll touch on both short-paid items and those that are clearly illegal.



Figure 1

The first example (Figure 1 above), is a short-paid first-class envelope sent from Newport, Rhode Island, to Georgetown, Massachusetts. It has the 1/2¢ value from the Presidential Series of 1938, popularly called the Prexies by many collectors. A properly paid first-class letter should have had either 3¢ in postage or 6¢ (for a double weight letter), so it is clearly short paid by at least 2 1/2¢. The letter evidently made it through the mail without incident to its destination and, thus, results in a scarce solo use of the 1/2¢ Prexie. My guess is that it made it through the mail because the 6¢ Prexie is a similar orange color. It is anyone's guess if the sender used the lower value intentionally or accidentally, although the fact that a return address is omitted makes me believe it was an intentional underpayment.

Figure 3

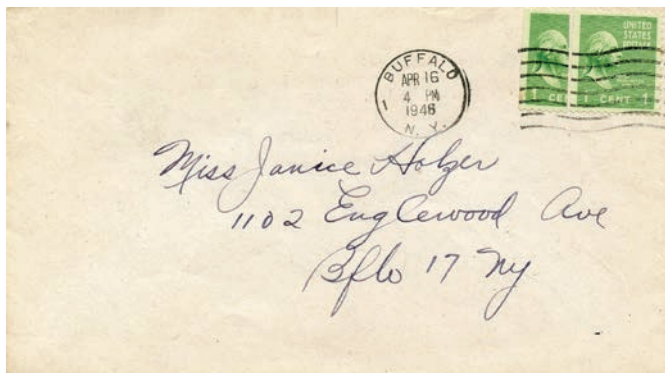


Figure 2

Next (see Figure 2), is another first-class letter where the then current 3¢ rate, which was in effect from July 6, 1932 through July 31, 1958, is paid with a 1¢ Prexie and a 2¢ revenue stamp (Scott R152). This clearly is an illegal use as revenue stamps were only allowed for payment of taxes and not postage. Although the letter should have been assessed 2¢ postage due, it made it to the destination without assessment. Although it is not clear, there is a return address in red at the bottom left of the envelope, so this may have been an honest mistake/misunderstanding.

Another type of illegal use that is seen with some frequency is the use of bisected stamps to pay a current rate. Although bisecting of stamps was allowed on early U.S. issues, it was explicitly prohibited by U.S. postal regulations after 1879. Nevertheless, letters with bisected stamps have frequently made it through the mail. Following are several twentieth century examples. The first (Figure 3) uses a 1¢ Prexie and a bisected 1¢ Prexie to pay the 1 1/2¢ printed matter rate in effect from April 1, 1932 through December 31, 1952. Next are three examples of bisected Prexie stamps used to make up the 3¢ first class rate: Figure 4 shows a 2¢ Prexie and a bisected 2¢ Prexie; Figure 5 shows a 1/2¢ Prexie and a bisected 5¢ Prexie; and Figure 6 shows a bisected 6¢ Prexie. On all four of the above covers containing bisected stamps, there is no return address, suggesting the senders all suspected what they were doing was wrong.

Not only are regular postage stamps used improperly or illegally, it is also possible to misuse the imprinted stamp on an embossed stamped envelope. These stamps are only valid when left intact on the original envelope produced by the U.S. Post Office Department/Postal Service. Postal regulations do not permit the embossed stamp to be cut out and pasted on another envelope.

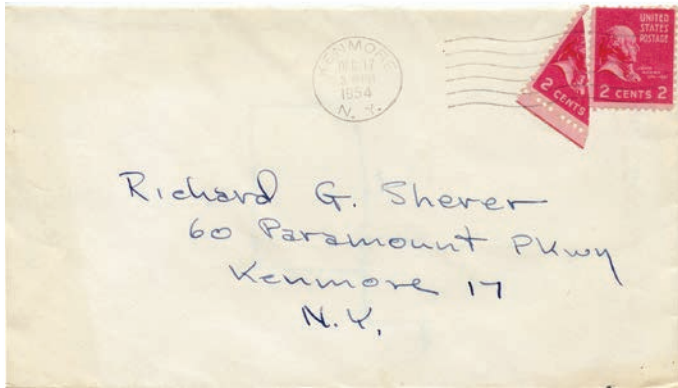


Figure 4

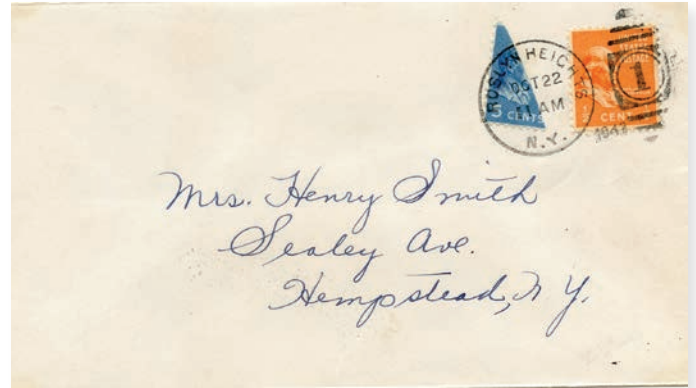


Figure 5

Figure 7 shows an example where the sender has done exactly that. The stamp from the 5¢ Lincoln embossed stamped envelope has been cut out and pasted onto another envelope to pay the 5¢ first class rate in effect from January 7, 1963 through January 6, 1968. Fortunately for the sender, the letter made it through the mail to the intended destination in Norwalk, Connecticut, leaving us with an interesting postal history piece.

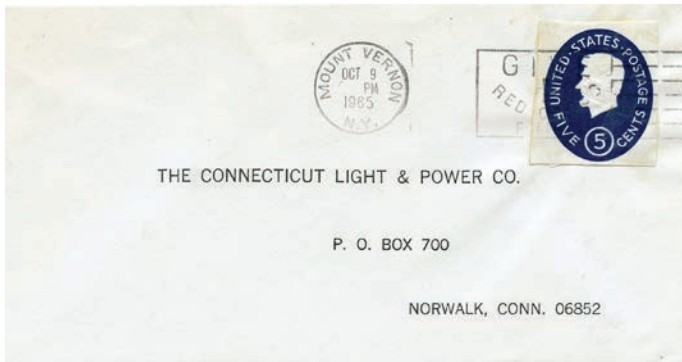


Figure 7

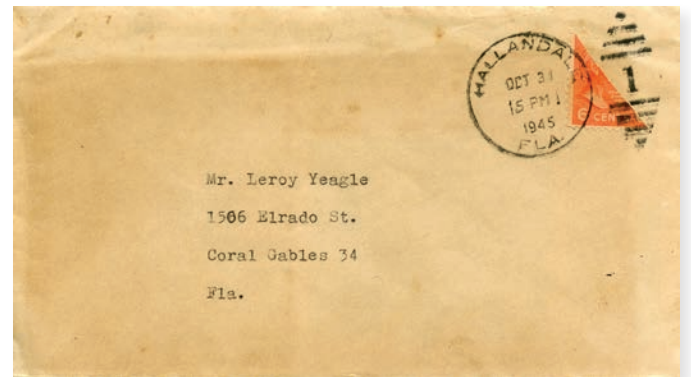


Figure 6

My final example is possibly the most interesting. At times, you see people attempting to mail items using stamp-like labels (i.e., cinderellas), such as Christmas seals. Usually, they are caught by the postal service, but sometimes they make it to the intended destination without being returned to the sender or assessed postage due. For many years, saving stamps, such as S&H green stamps, were used by stores as an added enticement to purchase their products/offerings. These saving stamps were usually perforated and gummed like postage stamps so that they could be separated and pasted into savings books which, when filled, could be traded for merchandise. Occasionally, you encounter a piece of mail that has one or more savings stamps placed on the envelope instead of stamps. Figure 8 shows an example of one of these savings stamps that was used to successfully send a letter from Easthampton to Northampton, Massachusetts. If you have an interesting example of an illegal use of stamps or cinderellas on cover, I would love to see it. I can be reached by E-mail at rich@pedersonstamps.com or mail at P.O. Box 662, Clemson, SC 29631.

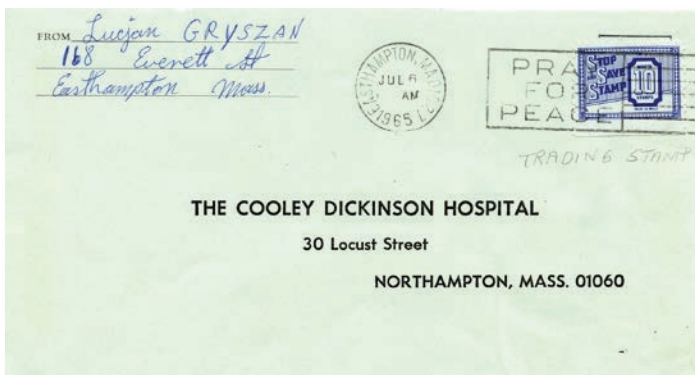


Figure 8

ALBUM WEEDS - HOW TO DETECT FORGED STAMPS

BY REVEREND RB EAREE

The Reverend Robert Briscoe Earee was the Rector of Miserden, Cirencester, England, and a devoted philatelist. He lived from 1848 - 1928, and wrote extensively on forgeries. He and two others were the authors of a lengthy series of articles called the Spud Papers, focusing on the forgeries of Phillip Spiro (Spiro called them “reproductions” and claimed he was not intending to defraud collectors or cheat the postal services. None of his stamps were marked as reproductions, however.)

In 1882 he published the first edition of Album Weeds, or, How to Detect Forged Stamps, which was primarily a summary of the Spiro forgeries. Two more editions came out each having many additions from many other forgers which had been discovered in the interim. The third edition is eight volumes, and is an extremely valuable reference for the person interested in, or concerned about, forgeries. That edition has been reprinted and is affordable.

The descriptions includes details of both the genuine stamps and the forgeries, so a visual comparison is easily, and accurately, done. He also describes forged cancels, when they are known to him. The forgeries are ascribed to the forger as well, so one can identify the origin and often the extent of the forgeries.

A small portion of the Bahamas section is reproduced here as an illustration of the style and completeness of his work.

RB Earee signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1921.

Genuine.

Engraved in *taille-douce*, perforation and watermark as above, according to the issue. The shading of the oval behind the head is composed of crossed lines; but the vertical lines are slightly more prominent than the horizontal ones. The face is shaded all over, except just along the ridge of the nose, and on the forehead, between the eyebrows; the neck is also shaded all over. The highest leaf of the top tuft of the pine-apple touches the top of its containing-oval. The top of the conch-shell in the oval on the other side of the stamp also touches the top of *its* containing-oval. There are two lines of shading on the ribbon, immediately before the first letter of INTERINSULAR, and two similar lines immediately after the last letter of POSTAGE. The border of the stamp is a dark strip of engine-turning; and immediately inside this is more engine-turning, but of a lighter and more lace-like pattern, not so heavily coloured. There are twenty-seven jewels in the lowest row of the crown, resting upon the hair.



Forged.

Lithographed, on stout, yellowish-white wove paper, pin-perforated 13, no watermark. The shading of the oval behind the head is of vertical lines only. All the central portion of the face is unshaded; and the centre of the bottom of the neck is also white. The highest leaf of the tuft of the pine-apple does not touch the top of the little oval; nor does the top of the conch-shell touch the top of its oval either.

As the (supposedly) ancient Chinese proverb goes: “May you live in interesting times”. The news media (I grew up in it) was once revered for its objectivity and factual reporting. So much for history! We have been introduced to obstruction, even obliteration or ignoring of facts in today’s reporting. While this is not a political statement, the proliferation of the phrase “Fake News” and its iteration in many news sources, has become a byword of our times.

Not to be outclassed or obscured by the commercial media, we philatelists have our own version of “Fake News”. My intention is to explore (but not exploit!) the presence and detection of fakes, forgeries, and fantasies in our philatelic world. I hope you enjoy the series, however long it may be, and be assured that I welcome comments, ideas, and suggestions, whether they be opposing or supportive - learning about our hobby is the goal.

This first article is about one of the early exposers of forgeries - a reverend, yet.

Larry

References:

Album Weeds - How to Detect Forged Stamps, by Reverend R.B. Earee, Third edition reprint, pub. The Manuka-Ainslie Press, Acton, Canberra, Australia.

Figure: Bahamas #1 penny red



CASE #525C

As most of you probably already know I love to cherry pick varieties from any source I can. Often from large auction lots, lots I am sorting for friends, and once in a while from a dealer table at a show. But, today's variety I picked up at the last Asheville show and it was properly identified. I just could not pass this one up as they are actually very rare and this was the first one I had ever seen in person. I managed part purchase and part trade, and I cannot be more excited to have this in my collection now.

Thanks Hugh! (the dealer I purchased this from)

It is a beautiful #525c, a 1 cent Washington Franklin, offset stamp, IMPERF between on a horizontal pair.

This is an extremely rare and *undervalued* variety in my opinion. Examples of these are always found with a straight edge on the right, as the perforating wheel that was broken was one row in to the left of the centerline of the sheet. As a result, most examples also show traces or all of the center line on the right edge. This is a textbook example of what a 525c should look like.

I highly doubt you will ever find one in a junk lot, but...if you can find one at a reasonable price it would be a worthy addition to any collection.



Some research done in July 2018 only showed only four examples for sale on eBay – all from same VERY HIGH end dealer! Auction results show only a handful of examples as well, less than ten pieces. Also a certificate search at the Philatelic Foundation only returned only four examples with certificates. It is obviously very scarce. I would bet less than 100 copies exist. I could be wrong, but these are not seen very often.

Varieties come in many types, I love them all!
Happy Hunting! Scott

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A ZIPPERED MOUTH

During my business transactions with various people who have stamp and coin collections, I sadly come across unfortunate situations that are all too familiar to me. Typically, when I receive an inquiry from a prospective client, I try to ascertain the size and scope of the client's holdings. Is it one album of stamps? Is it several albums and boxes of miscellaneous stamps or is it even a whole closet full? Knowing this information enables me to prepare ahead of time what research materials to bring along with an assortment of stamp tools to facilitate the appraisal process.

A few years ago, I received a call from "Ralph", a gentleman who lived in eastern Tennessee. It was obvious during our conversation that he had a relatively large collection of stamp albums, glassine envelopes, shoeboxes full of miscellaneous stamps, sheets of unused postage stamps, etc. We agreed to an early Saturday morning meeting time since it appeared the appraisal process would take me 3-5 hours.

I arrived promptly at 10:00 AM at his home just outside of Knoxville, TN. I had asked Ralph to have the material as openly displayed as possible in a well lighted area such as a dining room table. Ralph had complied perfectly to my instructions. As he had mentioned, the collection was very large indeed.

I started on the glassine envelopes first. They were neatly marked. Some countries required more than one glassine envelope to hold all of the various stamps yet I noticed that the "1 of 2" envelope was missing on some of the key foreign countries such as Germany, Italy and Canada. Next, I tackled the various shoeboxes full of both used and unused stamps but I did not see much in value. Finally, I started on the many albums of all description and condition.

Most of the albums were the typical 3-ring inexpensive albums I often come across. However, Ralph did have several expensive hingeless albums by Scott (U.S. made) and Lighthouse (German made). These hingeless albums alone cost over \$100 each new without any stamps.

When I opened a beautiful red Canada Lighthouse album, I saw some very nice early Canadian stamps. I also noticed that someone had carefully notated above each stamp slot the Scott catalog number of the stamp. I then noticed that some of the empty stamp slots had the pencil catalog number above the hingeless hinge but there was no stamp within the hinge.

I asked Ralph did he own that stamp at one time pointing to the Scott #63 which is the rust colored Queen Victoria Jubilee \$3 stamp. Ralph answered, "That Canada album was my father's and I just was never into collecting those foreign stamps". I counted twelve hingeless mounts that had Scott markings above them but contained no stamp. When I inquired as to their whereabouts, Ralph responded "why, a few months ago, my brother-in-law Harold asked me if I still had my stamp collection and if so, could he see it? Harold offered to purchase some of the Canadian stamps for his son's collection. He also wanted some of the glassine envelopes (the missing ones I had come across earlier that morning). So, Harold and I made a deal for \$350 for 12 stamps plus the few glassine envelopes if I remember right." I sat there somewhat astounded, but not shocked, as I had seen this type of situation before.

Ralph was so kind to his brother-in-law, that he sold high valued stamps probably worth several thousand dollars to his kindly brother-in-law for \$350 including several early year full glassine envelopes. Not wanting to start a feud between Ralph and his wife (Harold's sister...just 10 feet away), I felt keeping my mouth fully zippered closed at this point was the best practice.

I totaled up what Ralph had remaining and paid him a very nice sum but it could have been a lot more had Ralph not been so kind to his brother-in-law Harold.

It was obvious Harold knew what he was looking for in key stamps. He certainly took financial advantage of Ralph. Sad ending but that's real world out there. Ralph should have been at least curious as to why Harold only wanted certain early Canada stamps and not the whole album. Also, why did Harold only want the glassines that said "early years 1 of 2" on them? Why not envelopes 2 of 2 also? Obviously, the early years have the value potential and not the later years.

I departed Ralph's home that afternoon, somewhat sad Ralph had been taken to the cleaners by his brother-in-law. I could not say a word since Harold's sister was just 10 feet away in the kitchen. A zippered mouth can sometimes be the best response!

Happy collecting,
Robert



SHOWS & EVENTS

• **July 28-29** Charlotte, NC
 CHARPEX 2018
 Worrell Bldg
 Central Piedmont Community College
 1228 Elizabeth Avenue
 Charlotte, North Carolina 28204
 Sat: 10 - 6, Sun: 10 - 4
 Gene Zhiss, signup@charpex.info
 Phone: 704-553-8110

• **August 3-5** Peachtree Corners, GA
 Americover 2018
 Hilton Atlanta Northeast
 5993 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.
 Peachtree Corners, GA 30092
 770-447-4747
www.afdcs.org/amercover/2018

• **August 18-19** Columbia, SC
 Summer Stamp and Postcard Expo
 Spring Valley High School
 120 Sparkleberry Lane
 Columbia, South Carolina 29223
 Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4
 Mark Postmus
mapostmus@yahoo.com
 or mobile 803-309-2534

• **Sept. 8-9** Asheville NC
 Stamp & Postcard Show
 Comfort Suites Outlet Mall
 890 Brevard Road
 (next to Asheville Outlets)
 (I-26, exit 33 & NC Hwy exit 191)
 Asheville, North Carolina.

Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4
 Contact: Cary Cochran, 800-560-5310

• **September 15-16** Marietta, GA
 Stamp Dealers Association of GA
 Bourse
 Mansour Center
 995 Roswell Street
 Marietta, GA, 30060
 Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 3
 Contact: Len Curtis, 404-593-6838
collectemall@bellsouth.net

A PHILATELIC RESOURCE LIST FOR ASC MEMBERS

Two years ago, member Bob Bouvier created a spreadsheet listing philatelic resources in his possession that is intended to encourage and facilitate the sharing of published philatelic knowledge among our membership. Entries are categorized as books, periodicals and clippings. Each owner codes each entry for several sharing options that include lending and for how long, bringing to meetings [only], copying and/or scanning (with page limitations), and look-ups. Larry Oliver added his holdings that brought the totals up to 62 books, 7 periodicals, and 13 clippings. Bob is confident that other members have materials that would be of interest to our members and would welcome additions. The file is available to any current member with an email address and Bob will print off a copy for anyone who does not have an email account. Bob's contact information is found in our membership list. Thank you.

STAMPS – WANTED, FOR SALE OR TRADE

Wanted! WWII US patriotic covers - especially with cachets that are “politically incorrect”, humorous, or feature women. Top prices paid - which ain't much, frankly! Larry Oliver stamper707@gmail.com

Wanted! US First Issue Revenues. Large accumulations as I am looking for shades, paper types and cancellations. randallchet@gmail.com

For Sale! US Proprietary Die Stamps (Match & Medicines), first-third issue revenues, albums and pages. Visit MatchandMedicine.com

If you are a member of the ASC and have something of interest to list, feel free to email your classified ad to randallchet@gmail.com. As space allows, I'll do my best to include it in the next issues of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist.

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HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

Randall Chet

I must confess I had no idea I would be as enamored with what I experienced on vacation this year. For the last two weeks in June, my wife, oldest son and I did a loop around France with a brief stop in Switzerland. The final three days of our journey was spent in Paris, taking in the old world culture and visiting the city's landmarks and museums, and visiting the world's best Boulangeries and outdoor cafes. And a section of the city with not one, not two, but almost 30 stamp shops!

I admit, I really should have researched Paris stamp dealers before leaving the states. Maybe then I could have spent my Paris stamp afternoon exploring more effectively. I was the beneficiary of the World Cup games however, which is what my wife and son watched in one of the many brasseries surrounding the Passage des Panorama while I wandered.

Paris, along with the other large cities of Europe, especially those in Germany, embraced philately soon after the first postage stamp was issued by Great Britain in 1840. By the late 1800s Paris had hundreds of stamp shops, and the stamp fair at the Carré Marigny in the Eighth Arrondissement off the Avenue Gabriel has been in operation since the 1860s, when a rich stamp collector gave the space to the city of Paris for the express purpose of buying and selling stamps.

Figure 1, U295



Stamp shops along the Rue Drouot

for American audiences in Stanley Donen's 1963 romantic thriller, "Charade." Back then, the market was a beehive of activity, with dozens of dealers and wall-to-wall stamp enthusiasts. These days, only a dozen or so merchants continue to set up their small portable stalls for the thrice-weekly market, selling postcards and old letters as well as a few stamps. We weren't in town on Thursday, Saturday or Sunday which is when the fair is open, but I've read that the serious collector's best bet is to head over to the stamp district anyway.



Passage des Panoramas

Paris is still a city of stamp lovers. An estimated two million people in France have private postage stamp collections, according to the French Association of Dealers and Experts in Philately. Paris' stamp district where I explored is in the Right Bank's Ninth

Arrondissement. About 30 stamp shops line the Rue Drouot near the Hôtel Drouot, one of the world's oldest auction houses. Several more stamp shops are in the Passage des Panoramas, one of Paris's turn-of-the-19th-century covered arcades, in the Second Arrondissement. I concentrated on the small shops within the Passage des Panoramas, as these seemed to be smaller and more friendly to the casual browser, with the larger shops on the Rue Drouot carrying more expensive stamps or are exclusively devoted to auctions.

The Passage des Panoramas was opened in 1799, which makes it the oldest of the passages couverts (cov-



Passage des Panoramas

ered walkways) in Paris. It takes its name from the two round towers that once stood outside in the Boulevard Montmartre. Each tower contained giant circular frescos, or Panoramas, which were very popular at the time.

Tuesday was our last day in Paris, and we had a lot of ground to cover. (Over our 10 day trip we walked or hiked a total of 95 miles.) We began our morning by taking the metro up to Sacré-Cœur for a view over the city. Then we began a march south towards the Museum de Orsay, which would take us right through the stamp district.

The first shop we came to was NC-Philatelie. It was on the outskirts of the district and was an excellent introduction to the Paris stamp scene for me. It was a sleepy corner shop, full of old collections, stock books and albums, almost all French-related. The kindly proprietor and I struggled to communicate, but because I was the only customer in his shop the entire time, we had some time to figure it out. He did have a few elementary Arthur Maury turn of the century collections but none had any US sections of value. He explained Arthur Maury (Paris, 31 July 1844 – 1 December 1907) was one of the first French dealers and album publishers. Amongst the stamps and covers at these shops, some had several dozen US covers to Europe, so I concentrated on this material. When I asked for timbres fiscaux des États Unis, every dealer shook his head no. Several explained revenue collecting seemed big in the US, but they rarely handled any revenues, even French revenues. Several told me any decent US collections they received they would send to auction houses in New York.

At NC-Philatelie I picked out a U295 cover mailed from a New York stamp dealer to Augsburg Germany. It has a New York CDS of 12pm Oct. 6, and a backstamp of Oct. 7, 1893. The letter took 10 days by ship arriving on Oct 17. An item of little consequence I know but I was just looking for an inexpensive souvenir at this point. (Figure 1)



While browsing, I figured 95% of the stamps and collections I saw were regional France and colonies, although I did venture into a shop on the Rue Drouot which had turn of the century country collections very well priced at about 15% of catalog. I would have spent more time and budget here had I the €€ to spend. One US collection had a claimed 8500€ catalogue for 1500, all pre-1920, including a full set of used 1869 pictorials. Because most of the French dealers didn't seem to be well-versed in the details of classic US, there may have been some plate variety sleepers within the earlies in this collection.

One thing to keep in mind if you plan on visiting Paris: shops close and open throughout the day. Lunch is taken usually between 12 and 2 pm, (12:00 - 14:00) and most restaurants open at 7 pm. So, at 12 I began finding most of the stamp shops closed for lunch and we ventured down to the museum for the hottest part of the day. We returned to the stamp shops at about 3pm once everyone was back from lunch.

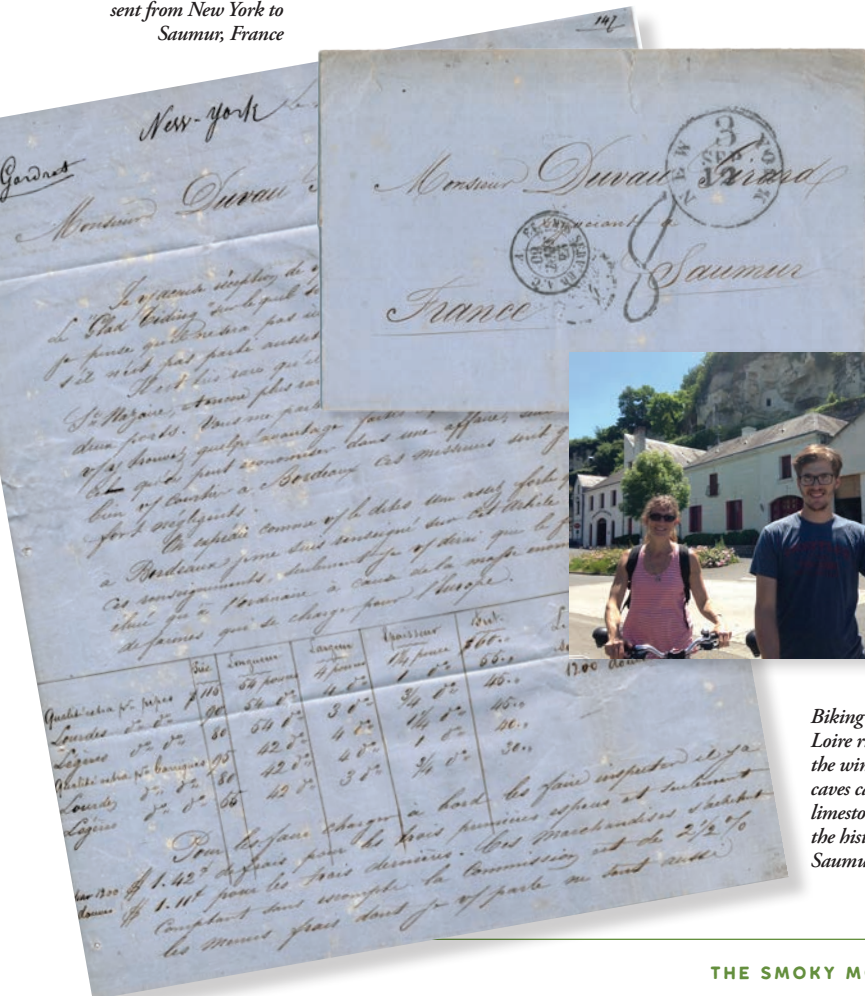
I spent about an hour at Marigny Philatelie, talking to Michel Gorski and his wife. In addition to a storefront, Michel does many shows, and also has a website at marigny-philatelie.com. He had nothing in the way of US, (but he did speak english!) and I picked up a Marseille to New York to Paris first-flight cover from him.



I also picked out from the bargain bin at Michel's shop, a so-so condition turn of the century postcard showing the base of the Eiffel Tower. There are many many post cards of the tower, but I've seen few showing the base underneath. I was interested in this item because the previous evening we spent relaxing in the shadow of the tower, taking in the sunset and drinking fine French wine. The base of the tower is now quite different – just a concrete pad for the crowds, souvenir and food stands. In one corner was a monument to Gustave Eiffel (1832-1923), which in the tower's evening lights, took on a surreal Fritz Lang *Metropolis* vibe! Oh well, I guess you can't go back, but I much prefer the once pastoral pond beneath the tower.

Item #3 is a stampless cover from another shop in the Passage des Panoramas. I was quite short on time at this point so unfortunately I did not even get this shop's name. The cover was sent from New York on the 12th of September 1860 and arrived in Paris, France 24th of Sept. The following day it arrived in Saumur. Saumur is a historic town located between the Loire and Thouet rivers, and is surrounded by the vineyards of Saumur itself, Chinon, Bourgueil, Coteaux du Layon, etc. which produce some of France's finest wines. This item was of

1860 stampless cover sent from New York to Saumur, France



Monument to Gustave Eiffel beneath his tower

interest to me because the first two days of our vacation we spent in Saumur, biking along the Loire river and visiting several wineries.

The letter is difficult to decipher, not so much because it is written in French, but because of the handwriting. It is from an A. Gardrat to Mr. Duvau Girard "merchant of Saumur", and contains prices for differing dimensions of wood for barrels, possibly? If anybody in the club speaks French, I would love to show this to you.



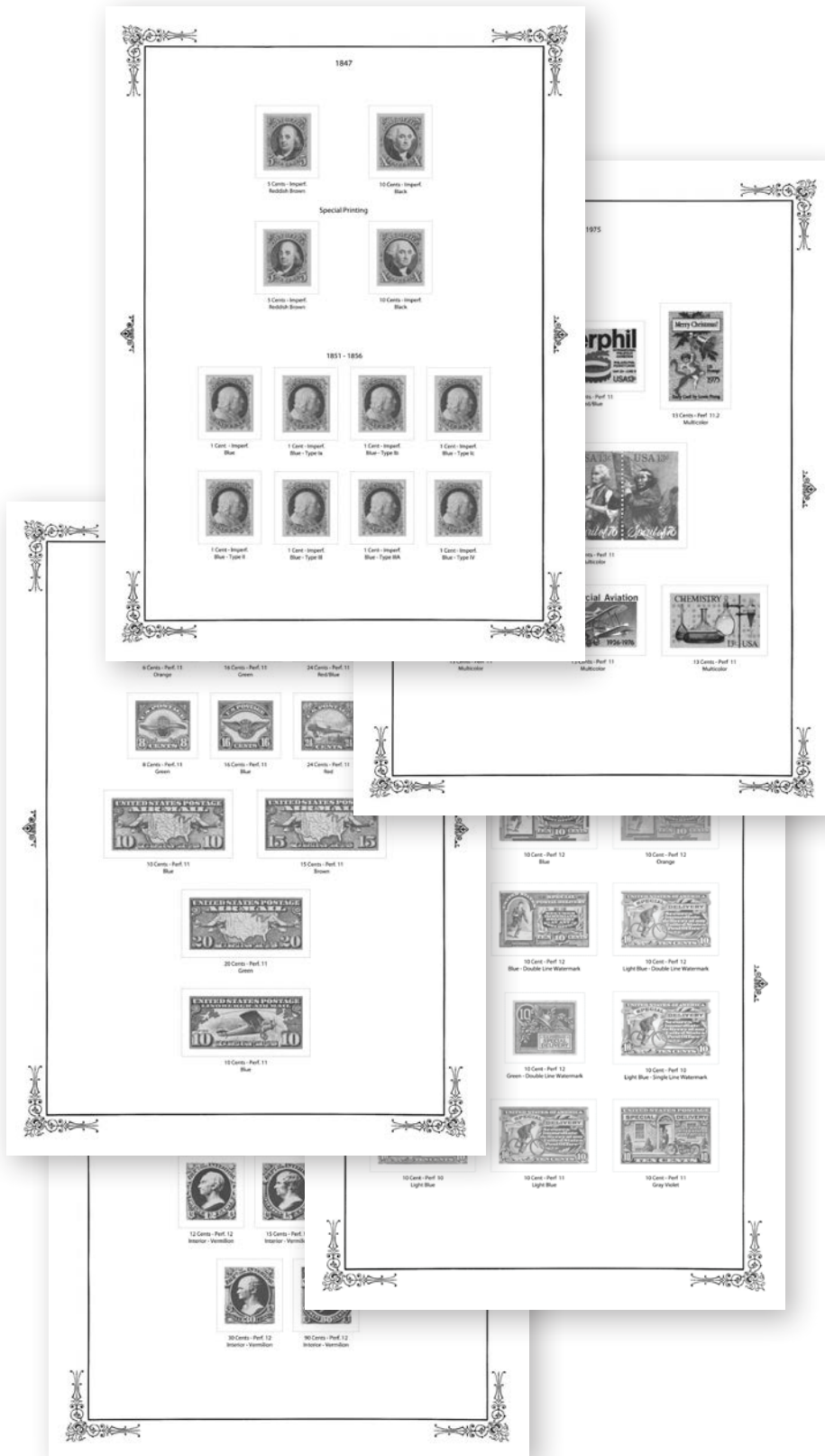
Biking along the Loire river visiting the wineries and wine caves carved into the limestone cliffs near the historic town of Saumur

In our day to day life we wrap context around nearly every experience, decision and interaction. Visiting France has given me the context to begin collecting from that part of the world. I'll start slow (and I actually have a small French collection I purchased last year from Bob Sazama), but experience adds so much more meaning. Happy vacationing and happy collecting!



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