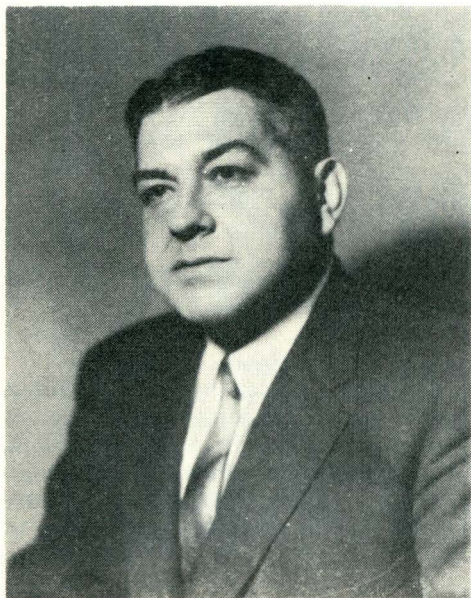


# Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award

## Herbert J. Bloch

### 1968 Recipient



#### Pre-Philatelic Career

Herbert J. Bloch was born in Buehl (Baden), Germany on November 21, 1907. He received his primary education locally and then was admitted to the well-known, Heidelberg University, for his higher education. He graduated as a specialist in law. In Germany, it was the custom for a potential lawyer to serve for three years in courts, with district attorneys and as secretaries to judges before taking the bar examination that is conducted by the national government. Mr. Bloch had just completed his three years and was ready for his bar examination, when he was prevented from doing this by the regulations of the Hitler regime. In 1933, he was dismissed from the legal profession. Then, he found employment with a family-operated business in his hometown.

Finding it intolerable to live in Germany under the Nazis, Herbert J. Bloch emigrated to the United States in 1936. Landing in New York, it was apparent to him that a German-trained lawyer could not practice here, so he turned to philately, becoming a professional philatelist. He had been collecting stamps since a boy of seven. Soon he made a livelihood as a stamp dealer, working for various New York City dealers, mostly on helping with the preparation of collections for auction sales.

In 1943, Mr. Bloch went with the international auctioneers, H. R. Harmer,

One of the world's greatest philatelic students, Herbert J. Bloch of New York, N. Y., was the unanimous choice of the Collectors Club's Board of Governors for the 1968 *Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award* "for distinguished services to philately" at its January, 1968 meeting.

Each year, the selection of the recipient of this coveted award begins early in December, when the Chairman of this Award Committee calls a meeting of all the American previous award recipients to suggest the names of philatelists, who in their opinion are worthy of this great honor. At the December meeting of the Board of Governors, always held at the end of the month, those names nominated by the previous recipients are presented to the Board of Governors for their consideration, and to be voted upon at the following regular board meeting in January.

Inc. of New York, and was put in charge of the philatelic division, that prepared material for forthcoming auction sales and made appraisals. He did this work for fifteen years, working on some of the greatest stamp collections. Two famous collections, whose auction sale catalogues were mostly the work of Herbert J. Bloch, were the President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Alfred Caspary collections. The entire catalogues of all the Caspary sales later were bound together in one handbook that now rank as an outstanding piece of philatelic literature and useful reference work.

#### **Expert Committee Work**

In 1948, the late Otto Friedl and the late Edwin Mueller, partners in the Mercury Stamp Co. of New York decided to form an expert committee. Soon, they began consulting with Mr. Bloch. Finding his knowledge so helpful, he was requested to join the Friedl Expert Committee, which he did. Today he is the sole surviving member.

His philatelic expertise has gained for Herbert J. Bloch an international reputation. Many philatelists, both amateur and professional, here and overseas consider his knowledge as about the foremost in the world today. He is a frequent consultant to the expert committees of the Philatelic Foundation, New York and the Royal Philatelic Society, London. Besides, many individuals and stamp firms seek his opinions.

In 1958, he joined the Mercury Stamp Co. as a partner and has continued with this well-known New York auction house up to the present time.

#### **Philatelic Services**

Mr. Bloch has been a member of many philatelic societies in the United States. Also, he has taken an active interest in some. He joined the Collectors Club in 1937, was elected a Governor in 1965 and has just been re-elected to a second 3-year term. From 1965 to 1967, he handled and planned the club's regular meetings as the Program Co-Chairman. In this capacity, he had arranged to bring to the meetings some exceptionally fine displays by philatelists from all over the country. He is a Life Member of the Philatelic Foundation.

#### **Exhibitions And Judge**

Another philatelic activity to which Mr. Bloch has given much free spare-time help is philatelic exhibitions and stamp shows. He has been a director of the Association of Stamp Exhibitions for twelve years. For many more years, he has served as a judge of local, regional and national shows. Because of his profound philatelic knowledge, he was made Exhibits co-chairman for the international FIPEX in New York in 1956. This work entailed the screening of the applications to exhibit.

In 1961, he performed his first service as a judge of international philatelic exhibitions. He was invited to be on the jury of the international air post exhibition in The Hague, Holland, Curiosa, and was elected to be the jury's chairman by the other jurors. This was repeated the following year at the Luposta in West Berlin. In 1966, he was an international judge at SIPEX in Washington, D.C.

#### **Also A Stamp Collector**

Although Herbert J. Bloch is the first professional chosen to be a recipient of the *Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award*, he has never lost his great "love" for stamps. He has formed an outstanding collection of the early German State of Baden and has spoken about it and displayed portions of it at the club's meetings.



*The Collectors Club Medal* for the best program presented during the year commenced in 1957. The winner of the first medal was Mr. Bloch for his lecture and display of "Surcharges and Overprints." Over the years, he has been a frequent speaker at the regular meetings, also a panelist on symposiums and expert nights.

Because of his intense interest in expert committee work, he began assembling a *Reference Collection* when he first began working for H. R. Harmer Inc. in 1943. Since then, it has grown to many, many volumes so that today it ranks as probably the finest reference collection in private hands. This collection provides the evidence for Mr. Bloch's great philatelic reputation. The material covers the whole world from the early classic issues to some of the most difficult 20th century stamps. The remarkable part of this tremendous private reference collection is its availability. Hardly a day passes that someone does not drop into the office of the Mercury Stamp Co. to ask Mr. Bloch's assistance with some philatelic problem. To our knowledge, no one ever has been refused. It is truly remarkable to see how a busy philatelic professional, like Mr. Bloch, allows himself to be interrupted by a collector or dealer with a problem.

Futhermore, many a friend of Mr. Bloch's has received excellent philatelic advice from him. He has suggested to many, interesting fields to collect, as well as what material to seek and what to forego. I would call him not only a great philatelic expert, but also a wonderful philatelic adviser, for which he has never charged a cent.

#### Family Life

Mr. Bloch married in Germany and came here with his wife. Three children were born to them in this country. After a long illness, Mrs. Bloch died in 1966. His children are grown now and have just completed their higher education. Each of his two daughters and his son were brilliant students, having earned a Phi Beta Kappa key. His son, Peter, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year at the University of Rochester, one of six in his class to gain this high scholastic honor.

In concluding, one knowing Herbert J. Bloch never thinks of him as professional, interested only in the commercial side of philately. Actually he is a collector at heart. He truly loves stamps; he will constantly talk about them, and philately undoubtedly is the most important factor in his life. His profound philatelic knowledge is outstanding, but, in my opinion, his willingness and pleasure in sharing this knowledge with others is even more remarkable. He becomes the 17th honored recipient of this award. The previous ones were:

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| *1952 Theodore E. Steinway, New York, N. Y.    | 1960 J. R. W. Purves, Melbourne, Australia    |
| *1953 Dr. Clarence W. Hennan, Chicago, Ill.    | 1961 John J. Britt, New York, N. Y.           |
| *1954 Dr. Carroll Chase, Amherst, N. H.        | *1962 Mrs. Louise B. Dale, Red Bank, N. J.    |
| *1955 August Dietz, Sr., Richmond, Va.         | 1963 Henry M. Goodkind, New York, N. Y.       |
| 1956 Sir John Wilson, London, England          | 1964 Vincent G. Greene, Toronto, Canada       |
| 1957 Harry L. Lindquist, New York, N. Y.       | 1965 Alvaro Bonilla Lara, Santiago, Chile     |
| 1958 Winthrop S. Boggs, E. Orange, N. J.       | 1966 H. D. S. Haverbeck, Bernardsville, N. J. |
| *1959 Gen. C. W. Wickersham, Cedarhurst, N. Y. | 1967 John R. Boker, Jr., Scarsdale, N. Y.     |

#### Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, Also

For the first time, the highest philatelic honor in both the United States and Great Britain has been accorded to the same philatelist. Approximately one month after his election as the 1968 recipient of *The Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award* Mr. Herbert J. Bloch received a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Board of Elections of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain that he had been elected to be a *Signer of The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists* (see the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST Vol. 45, No. 6). (H. M. G.)

\*Deceased