

1958 ALFRED F. LICHTENSTEIN MEMORIAL AWARD

Editor's Preface

It has been a practice of this magazine ever since *The Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award* was established in 1952 to run a short biography of the annual recipient of this medal "for distinguished service to philately."

Since this Award for 1958 was voted to Winthrop S. Boggs, he was asked to supply the editor of *THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST* with biographical data about his career. The following account is substantially what was given to us. It is published because it is thought that many collectors enjoy reading the intimate details of how and why one became interested in collecting stamps as well as how a longtime distinguished career evolves.

A PHILATELIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY

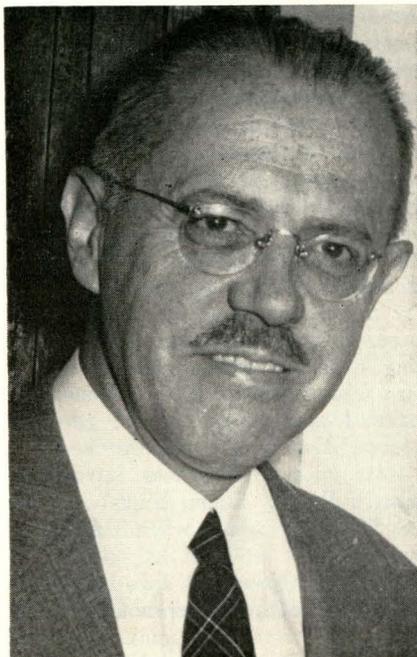
By WINTHROP S. BOGGS

My pre-philatelic days began in December 1902, my birth being on Manhattan Island, thus making me one of those comparatively rare creatures, a native-born New Yorker still in love with the wonderful city of his birth.

In 1905 my family moved to Summit, N. J. In 1907 we settled in South Orange, N. J. where I grew up and spent my school days.

In the spring of 1911 IT happened. The goings on in the class room were dull indeed. Across the aisle was a gangly, freckle-faced boy. My wandering eye caught sight of some colorful bits of paper on a white sheet, which he was surreptitiously looking at behind the large geography book he was supposed to be studying. If it were bait, I bit, because I whispered "Whatcha got?" A laconic sidemouthered whisper "stamps" was the response. When the teacher's back was turned, a hissed "let's see" resulted in a sly passing of what turned out to be two approval sheets. Each sheet had twenty-five stamps priced at one cent each.

When we were leaving school, my friend invited me over to his house. After going home and cadging a nickel from Mom, I spent the rest of the afternoon in his kitchen deciding on which stamps to buy for five cents. He showed me his collection, which to my inexperienced eye, was a vast assemblage. In this way was started an affair



with stamps, which has continued with unabated ardor for close to half of a century.

A few cents a week, sometimes slightly augmented by funds from odd jobs, went for stamps. I avidly read everything about stamps one could find, and ransacked the local library for stamp books and magazines.

So IT proceeded. I made my own albums, using various price lists to check what was missing. For my tenth birthday my father gave me a cloth-bound Scott's Imperial Album (the 4th edition) then selling for 40 cents together with a packet of one hundred "all different" foreign stamps. On New Year's Day 1913 we went to visit my paternal grandmother, who lived with my Uncle Bill and Aunt Lillian. This visit was rendered memorable by discovering that even grown-ups collected stamps, because Uncle Bill brought out his brown cloth Scott's International Albums, 19th and 20th Century. This, to a youngster's eyes, was a stupendous collection. Uncle Bill explained the differences between the 2c Triangles on the U. S. 1894-95 issues. He also showed me a Scott's Catalogue, as well as giving me quite a lot of stamps. All this opened up new vistas of delight. My enthusiasm was unbounded.

In between pursuing stamps, I did my small chores, went to school, tended to my assorted and sometimes unlikely pets, while successfully avoiding music lessons.

In September 1913, my first Scott's Catalogue was purchased, the 1914 edition selling at 90 cents. It was edited by John N. Luff, a name which meant much to me then, and even more today.

By 1915 U. S. coils, plate blocks and envelopes became enthralling, having absorbed all to be read. Although concentrating on United States stamps, I never lost the opportunity to read about or examine the stamps of other countries. I was also fortunate in getting to know several nearby adult collectors, who invited me to their homes several times to look at stamps, often gave advice and sometimes a few duplicates. It was this year also that I was introduced to "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News". It was a "blue Monday" indeed when this failed to arrive on time.

During my high school days from 1917 to 1921, I became the leader among the boys, who were interested in stamps. We used to gather frequently after school in our respective homes to have stamp sessions. Even then I endeavored to inculcate in my fellow collectors a love of stamps for their own sake and play down the commercial aspect, a practice continued through the years.

In 1918, through a schoolmate, I met a neighbor, whose stamp holdings were quite

extensive. He invited me to become a member of the Philatelic Society of The Oranges, which met every Friday evening in East Orange, N. J. Not only were the exchange books a liberal education, but the regular monthly feature of visiting speakers was eagerly awaited and followed with undivided attention. Two speakers are remembered very well, men to whom I was later to become indebted to, one in particular. The first was Col. A. Appleton, who showed the Club his remarkable lot of Afghanistan. Many of his fine pieces as well as all of his notes were acquired some fifteen years later. The other one was the beloved Dr. J. Brace Chittenden, who showed his grand lot of Austria, and whose inspiration led me later to form a collection of these stamps.

During these years an education of sorts was acquired in spite of school rather than because of it. Actually philately was my teacher. Arithmetic was gained from figuring face value and catalogue prices; geography was learned from locating foreign stamps and United States precancels taught me about my own country. As far as languages were concerned, more was learned from foreign stamps than from school textbooks. As for chemistry, what made stamps change color was my chief interest. While the application of mathematics was how to figure the shortest distance to a stamp club, dealer or collector's home. My only use for mechanical drawing was to lay out album pages and annotate them. Nevertheless, the school authorities finally graduated me in June 1921.

September 1921 marked my first job in New York with a Wall Street brokerage house. This was most convenient, because I could curtail my eating time at lunch, spend forty-five minutes on Nassau Street. On Saturday afternoons the stamp shops were haunted by me. In this way I got to know the Klemann brothers, John and Jake; the Burger brothers, Gus and Arthur; the beloved Percy Doane; and last but not least, the great J. Murray Bartels, who became a staunch friend, and whose office was jokingly termed the "school for stamp dealers" because so many of those, who worked for him, later achieved their own reputation as stamp dealers.

In 1922 came my philatelic writing. This was a correspondence carried on in the columns of "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News"

with a Major Bonesteel of West Point, concerning certain varieties on the U. S. 3c green and the 2c brown of 1883. Also the year 1922 was memorable because Mr. Bartels invited my father and me to attend a meeting of the Collectors Club which was then located at 140 West 49th Street over the famous Zucca's Restaurant. My memories of that evening are enshrined in a haze of wonder, amid the atmosphere of cigar smoke and minestrone, plus the aura of being in the presence of such distinguished philatelists as Alfred F. Lichtenstein, T. E. Steinway, J. C. Morgenthau, Joseph Lozier, Admiral F. Harris, and last but not least, the famous John N. Luff himself. All of them were most kind and later did much to encourage me in my philatelic activities. Dr. Chittenden, invited me to visit the library on Saturday afternoons.

When September came I went up one Saturday to find Dr. Chittenden busy in the library which then occupied a space not much larger than the present cloakroom in the Club. After a while Mr. Lichtenstein came in. Dr. Chittenden extended an invitation to join the Club. I became a member on October 25, 1922, being proposed by Dr. Chittenden and seconded by Mr. Lichtenstein.

Afterwards I attended the meetings and also spent many Saturday afternoons helping Dr. Chittenden with the library, while absorbing his wisdom on stamps and philatelic literature. Shortly before one meeting, Mr. Luff, then the president of the Club, heard me mention the difficulty distinguishing types of the U. S. 1c 1851-57 stamps. He immediately took me over to a table, while drawing from his pocket a number of these stamps, proceeded to show how to distinguish the various types by a method that has remained with me ever since.

It was at this time that the formation of an extensive philatelic library began. With the help of Dr. Chittenden I acquired the fundamental books that every philatelic library of those days required. Since then by a process of selection and replacement a sound philatelic library covering every phase of philatelic study has been built.

Another memorable event in 1922 was an evening spent with Dr. Carroll Chase at his home on Carroll St. Brooklyn. Having met Dr. Chase at the Club, he invited me to come and visit him. Dr. Chase has no doubt for-

gotten this visit, but to a youth it was an inspiration. Dr. Chase's kindness and patience in instructing me on the characteristics of early U. S. stamps, particularly the 3c 1851-57 stamps was enthralling.

Due to the death of my mother in 1923, for a year or two my philatelic activities were curtailed. But in 1925 I became interested in the stamps of Australia. It was this year also that I took a position with a real estate firm with offices on Nassau Street. This made it even more convenient to visit the stamp dealers where I spent every spare moment. In those years I came to know Sidney F. Barrett, Eugene N. Costales, Gordon Ustick, George Sloane, Hugh C. Barr and the late Max Ohlman, all of whose friendship is valued highly today.

The International Philatelic Exhibition held in New York in the spring of 1926 was attended from opening to closing as soon as I could leave work. Every exhibit was inspected. Various groups discussing stamps were joined, and for a time I was invited by a few judges to accompany them as they judged some of the exhibits. At the end of the show I assisted in the demounting, which afforded the opportunity to more closely examine some of the material on display.

In 1927 the burden of illness struck my family, so that there was little money for stamps. Nevertheless, I collected what could be afforded but kept on reading, as well as attending stamp club meetings. This situation continued until 1929.

As I grew older many of my non-philatelic friends would often remark, "What do you see in stamps?" I have learned not to bother to try to explain, but merely ask what does one see in any hobby or sport? However, in the earlier years I was optimistic enough to think that the charm of philately could be explained. Thus I thought that a collection of some fifty pages or so could be formed each with a philatelic item that would have a story that might interest the philistine.

Having just finished reading Lowell Thomas' "Beyond The Khyber Pass", I decided to begin that collection with a stamp and cover from "Afghanistan". My first attempts at securing Afghan items met with blank stares. Finally a small dealer in a ramshackle building in Brooklyn offered me several covers with the 10p rose of 1921 on

them at a quarter each. Then I endeavored to secure one of the early Afghanistan Tiger Head stamps, and finally came up with one of the cheaper varieties. The difficulty in finding these plus the fact that so very few seemed to know much about Afghanistan aroused my curiosity. Also Col. Appleton, who had displayed his Afghanistan collection before the Philatelic Society of The Oranges, had written on this country in "The American Philatelist" in 1924. After reading it, my interest was aroused to fever pitch. So in the spring of 1930 I embarked on the collecting of this unpopular but fascinating country, and it is still going. Unfortunately, this waylaid my "Philistine" collection, which never got beyond this one Afghan cover. In 1932 Sidney F. Barrett asked me if I would be interested in writing a series of articles on the new stamp designs for "The American Philatelist". I was hesitant, but he assured me that he was confident that it could be done and he offered to help with any difficulties. Thus I contributed a monthly article to that magazine from September 1932 to November 1936, missing only two numbers. The reception that these articles received encouraged me to write more. Consequently, I began writing philatelic articles for non-philatelic publications such as "The Railroad Magazine", "Musical Quarterly" and many others; also for "The American Stamp Digest", which did not last long owing to the economic troubles of the time.

In fact, the economic upheaval caused us to move back to the Oranges. (The "we" in this instance now being my wife Dorothy and I.) No sooner had we moved back to New Jersey than I rejoined the Philatelic Society of The Oranges, which was still meeting in the usual place. The 1932 economic situation becoming worse, finally saw me along with many others looking for a job. Fortunately, one was quickly found with a beverage concern located in a "philatelic Siberia" on West 54th Street, near the Hudson River. However, it did not take long to discover a couple of stamp dealers in the Columbus Circle area, which afforded some manna to a "starving philatelist", but nearly every Saturday saw me back on Nassau Street in the usual haunts.

My first entry in a philatelic exhibition was The New Jersey Philatelic Federation Stamp

Show held a show in Jersey City, where my Afghanistan was shown for the first time. It was awarded a first in its group, and attracted some attention. As a result, invitations were received to exhibit the collection before various stamp clubs. The move back to the Oranges also revived my latent interest in railways, with the result that I began a collection of "Railroad Philately". This included not only stamps with railway trains on them, but stamps issued by railway administrations, railway cancellations and markings. In 1932 "topical collection" was an unknown philatelic term, so that this was really pioneering in a specialty that now has gained such popularity.

In 1933 Hugh C. Barr asked if I would care to try breaking up a collection for auction. This idea appealed because it afforded a chance to examine, study, and handle stamps at no expense. He gave me a collection of China to lot up. This experience resulted in the cataloguing of many collections for auction. Some of the important ones were the George Ewing U. S. 20th century, Nassau Stamp Co. stock and the Col. Green Sale XIX.

The idea that stamp exhibitions should have courts of honor, where notable collections could be shown non-competitively was beginning to take hold under the inspirational drive of Mr. Lichtenstein. Consequently when it was decided to have a show at Gimbels in 1933, such a device was used. Mr. Lichtenstein and Admiral Harris suggested my Afghanistan in the Court of Honor of this show. Aside from the unusual material, most people thought that the stamps of Afghanistan must be difficult to understand. As a matter of fact there are a number of other countries in the catalogue, which are equally if not considerably more difficult.

"The Journal-American" promoted a successful National Stamp Show in Radio City in 1934. I suggested and organized a corps of guides, known as the Guide Service, which conducted visitors around the show in order to save them time; to enable them to see the significant exhibits; or to find quickly what they were seeking. This idea was later adopted by many other shows. Also my Afghanistan was exhibited in the foreign competition, winning the third prize in a group of nine entries.

In February 1936, Mr. Costales offered me the position in his New York office just at the time when the 1936 International Philatelic Exhibition was coming to fruition. As a result of twenty-six years of philatelic activity, I now found myself in it full time. Being with Mr. Costales was a liberal education, not only in the mechanics of stamp dealing, but also with stamps. Practically every type of collection came into Mr. Costales' office.

A memorable event was my first talk before The Collectors Club. This was on the night of April 1, 1936, and, of course, it was about my favorite—Afghanistan. It was a tremendous honor to have the evening given over to me, and my nervousness is remembered. At that time the Club rooms were on the third floor of 30 East 42nd Street, the lecture room being larger than the present one. This marked the first of many talks made on philately.

One afternoon in 1937 a young man came into Costales' office to inquire what we had in Indian Native States. It did not take long for us to find many interests in common. Since then H. D. S. Haverbeck, now President of The Collectors Club and I have become fast friends. In fact, at one time we had formed a joint collection of Kashmir. It is not often that stamp collections are a partner ownership.

Later that year the Philatelic Society of The Oranges was approached by the South Orange-Maplewood Adult School with the request to offer a course on stamp collecting. The upshot was that on October 12, 1937 I gave the first course in philately offered by an adult school. These courses were repeated until the advent of the War in 1941. They also attracted the attention of other organizations with the result that similar courses on philately were given before the Bell Telephone Laboratory Stamp Club, Brooklyn Edison Stamp Club, Associated Business Stamp Clubs and others. Many urged me to prepare a book based on these courses, so that those unable to attend could have the benefit of them.

In 1940 Mr. Theodore Chambers asked me to write a series of articles for "The Chambers Stamp Magazine" with the right to choose the subjects. A number of articles were contributed. He later suggested that

a handbook on the stamps of Newfoundland, which he believed would fill a long-felt want in philatelic literature. In turn, Mr. Alfred Lichtenstein was approached with the idea because of his famous B. N. A. collections. He was enthusiastic and invited me to study his collections and material, all of which he freely placed at my disposal. Finally early in 1942 the "Postage Stamps and Postal History of Newfoundland" appeared.

It was such a success, that Mr. Chambers wanted to know if a similar work on the stamps of Canada were possible. Again approaching Mr. Lichtenstein, he agreed to help me write such a book. I little realized what an undertaking it would turn out to be. After much work, it finally appeared in 1946. As to this one can only say that it was awarded the Crawford Medal by The Royal Philatelic Society, London in 1947.

In the meantime, collections of Tibet and Formosa were formed. Finally in 1945 Mr. Lichtenstein invited me to take charge of the Expert Committee of The Philatelic Foundation which was in the process of formation. I accepted, and since April 1, 1945 have been with that organization.

In the fall of 1945 the Philatelic Foundation selected me to offer the course in philately with the Board of Education of the City of New York. This not only was favorable for philately, but was important to The Philatelic Foundation as an educational service. They continued for six years. Then they were offered as part of the program of the Columbia Institute of Arts and Sciences until 1955. Plans are presently underway to revive these courses in the fall of 1958 here at 22 East 35th Street. The book, "The Foundations of Philately" based on these courses was published by D. Van Nostrand Co. in conjunction with The Philatelic Foundation in America and simultaneously in London by Faber & Faber in 1955. It has proved successful.

The preparations for the International Philatelic Exhibition in 1947, (CIPEX) started early in 1946. The Chairman appointed me to the Executive Committee and placed me in charge of the Lecture Hall Program. In that year I also was elected a member of the Royal Philatelic Society, being proposed by Mr. Lichtenstein and seconded by Sir John Wilson. In March 1950 I was elected a Fellow of this Society.

In 1951 the Canadian International Philatelic Exhibition also took place. Besides showing Afghanistan, I arranged the exhibits of The Philatelic Foundation, gave the lecture "The Expert Committee Looks at A Stamp" for the Foundation many times. It was during this exhibition that the Reintex International Philatelic Exhibition to be held in Monte Carlo in May 1952 extended an invitation to be the United States representative and also serve on the Board of Judges. The experiences and knowledge gained at this European international exhibition were among the most fruitful and satisfying ever.

In the meantime, towards the end of 1951, "the Voice of America" approached the Philatelic Foundation for assistance for "the Voice of America Stamp Club". We made several broadcasts, which were translated into a dozen or more languages. Also The Philatelic Foundation provided all the answers to the numerous stamp questions they received from all over the world.

In 1953 the John N. Luff Memorial Award (a name I shall always respect and esteem) was given to me by The American Philatelic Society.

1953 marked my election to the Board of Governors of The Collectors Club and the appointment of chairman of its Publications Committee. In 1954 an unusual United States stamp came before The Philatelic Foundation's Expert Committee. A short article was suggested explaining its occurrence. This resulted in a two-part article in the C. C. P., which was later revised and published as a handbook by The Collectors Club. It was called "The Early American Perforations and Perforating Machines".

In 1955 I was made an honorary life member of the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain.

In 1956 New York was the scene of another International Philatelic Exhibition, (FIPEX). I arranged the Philatelic Foundation's exhibits, as well as serving on the International Board of Judges. In cooperation with the Editor, Henry M. Goodkind, we arranged a special double number of THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST. The article on Postmaster Robert Morris of New York's Letterbook 1845-47 was my contribution.

And so we come to today. In looking back over what are merely the highlights of a

long service in philately, I am cognizant of many things which although small in themselves have enabled me to assist fellow philatelists in various ways. Some famous collections handled as a professional, the various shows at which I have assisted, the many talks given and the numerous individuals assisted or counselled in some way, all add up to a sense of fulfilment and joy in one's chosen work. All of these activities have enabled me to improve my understanding of collectors and their philatelic problems as well as teaching me more. Nor would it be truthful to say that the various honors that have come my way have not been a source of gratification. No human being honest with himself denies his pleasure in the plaudits of his fellow men. However, all such honors bring with them the greater responsibility of living up to what they represent.

In looking back over the years, it can truthfully be said that my aim has always been to encourage, to inform, and enlarge my own knowledge of stamps in every way possible. How well I have lived up to those aims will not be for me to assess, but rather to allow the record speak for itself.

One final word. In over 45 years of philately, I would say that the waters of philately run deep. The constructive work done by the sincere well-wishers in the hobby has borne fruit and will continue to do so in the future. The standing of The Collectors Club is greater than ever since its establishment more than 60 years ago. The Philatelic Foundation founded in 1945 is growing, becoming the force in philately as its founders anticipated. In many other countries sound philately has been growing also. Therefore, the surface turbulence that occupies the attention of much of the popular press is not a true indication of the strength of philately. Reading the older stamp magazines will sound strangely familiar, much of which could be reprinted under today's date and nobody would know the difference. To those of us, who know the real joys of the hobby, the future holds great promise because there will always be those, who undisturbed by the passing show, will join our ranks and continue to do constructive work. Just as the pioneers in philately would be astonished at the advances students have made in the last seventy years, so one feels confident it would be, if he were able to return many years hence.