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## The 1955 A. F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award to August Dietz, Sr.

*August Dietz, Sr.* was born October 19, 1869, at Windecken in Hesse-Nassau, Germany. When his parents migrated to this country in 1871, he came along as a two-year old baby. Th us in all but accident of birth, he is completely American. The Dietz family settled in Richmond, Va. and have been residents of that city continuously, right up to the present.

Starting in stamp collecting at the age of ten or eleven years, August Dietz came into the hobby through seeing a teacher in the school he attended showing stamps and giving historical talks. He remembers a cover postmarked "Jerusalem" as intriguing him specially at this period. So around 1880 he was making the usual stuck-down collection of the period, even to shearing the perforations off his stamps!

In the mid-1880's he was apprenticed to a firm of printers which handled all three major processes—lithography, letterpress work and engraving. He thus came to know at first hand the processes used in making stamps. To this day he likes to speak of himself as "the oldest apprentice in America; the only fellow who doesn't know it all." The men under whom he served his apprenticeship were in part those who had actually engraved, lithographed and printed stamps for the Confederacy. Thus it was natural that his philatelic interests should be primarily in Confederate States of America issues.



August Dietz Sr.

When the Virginia Philatelic Society was started in 1896, Mr. Dietz was in the group. The next year, 1897, he began publishing his first stamp magazine, the *Virginia Philatelist*. From the start, he contributed articles on Confederate stamps. This paper was continued for five annual volumes. In 1899 acquisition of the Hiram E. Deats collection of Confederates and all the accompanying correspondence, data, and other material placed August Dietz in the position of being able to carry through to completion the needed philatelic studies.

In 1900 he founded the Dietz Printing Company, which rapidly became known as

the South's finest printing house. His own personal skill as a designer of layouts, advertising, and even type faces, contributed to this success. In fact, he contributed the United States chapter for the great 500-Year Anniversary volume of the Gutenberg Society, by invitation.

The Dietz Printing Co. is a family enterprise. Mr. Dietz's son, August Dietz Jr. (also a stamp collector) was his partner in business until his death, November 12, 1954, at the age of 52. Now his grandson, August Dietz III, is operating the business with the recent assistance of another grandson, Charles M. Dietz. Looking far into the future to carry on the Dietz printing and philatelic traditions is a great-grandson, August Dietz IV (aged 5), who already is being rubbed with printer's ink and taught the fascination of stamp collecting.

Not his standing as a printer, but that as a philatelist, is the phase of August Dietz's long life which the Collectors Club honors by this present award. In so doing we recognize his continuing contributions to our field since the days of his receiving the *Lindenberg Medal* in 1938 and the *Eidsness Award* in 1941. Indeed, what he has brought to us since those days would possibly entitle him to the 1955 *A. F. Lichtenstein Award* if all of his earlier work were entirely overlooked.

August Dietz's philatelic magazine articles are too numerous for us even to mention. Not only did they appear in his own magazines:

The Southern Philatelist (1924-28)

The New Southern Philatelist (1929-1936)

Stamp and Cover Collecting (1933-1936)

Stamp and Cover Collectors' Review (1931-1938)

but in almost every stamp journal of any consequence. As early as 1925 he is listed in the Cumulative Index of the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST as an author.

His two great works are the courts of last resort, for correctness of information as well as completeness of covers, on Confederate stamps. One is "The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America", published in 1929. The other is the "Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook". This, which began as a pocket volume in its

earliest editions, has steadily grown in scope. As this biography is written, Mr. Dietz is close to completion of the manuscript of a new edition, adding in much new information and checking carefully every statement for accuracy.

Many of us have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Dietz's beautiful Confederate material at various stamp exhibitions. It was conspicuous, in a strong Confederate section, and took high award at Cipex 1947.

Beyond the strictly Confederate field, Mr. Dietz has been much consulted, always advantageously, by those concerned with problems involving experience and detailed knowledge of the various printing processes. Probably he is the only man now active among us, who can bring from his own knowledge information out of all three major ways of making stamps, and assess the bearing of a lithographic point on one in line-engraving, or a letterpress matter as it affects either other process. His many years of help to other collectors, based on this ability, aid in making him the best qualified man for our award in 1955.

Of some slight interest is the fact that, though 86 years young, Mr. Dietz not only spends half of each day at his business, but never misses any of the Wednesday night meetings, every week in the year, of the current stamp club in Richmond. Likewise, he is always at meetings of the Confederate Stamp Alliance. Many of us of the Collectors Club remember with pleasure his share as judge on the 1952 Exspa show in New York.

In short, August Dietz Sr. is indeed the stamp man best qualified for the 1955 *Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award*. We rejoice that he is still with us and hope we may celebrate his 100th birthday philatelically with him. (S. G. R.)