

# Collectors Club Philatelist



## A Survey of Modern Postal Counterfeits

Volume 100 Number 6 \$10

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# The Collectors Club Philatelist

**Editor:**  
Wayne L. Youngblood  
*wystamps@gmail.com*

**Layout and Design:**  
Jason E. Youngblood  
*jyoungblood@gmail.com*

**Editorial Board**  
Niko Courtelis  
John D. Dowd  
Matthew Healey  
Robert P. Odenweller, RDP

**Advertising Manager:**  
Robert Gray  
*robertgray@me.com*

**Book Review Editor:**  
Dr. Luca Lavagnino, Europe

**Editorial Correspondence:**  
*wystamps@gmail.com*

**Business Correspondence:**  
22 E 35th St  
New York NY 10016-3806  
Tel. (212) 683-0559  
Fax (212) 481-1269  
*email: info@collectorsclub.org*

**Executive Secretary:**  
Irene Bromberg, PhD  
*ibromberg@collectorsclub.org*  
**website:**  
*www.collectorsclub.org*

**Librarian:**  
Andrea Matura  
*readingroom@collectorsclub.org*

An Authors' Guide for the  
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executive secretary.

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All Collectors Club meetings currently are held online, via ZOOM, and begin at 5:30 p.m. (Eastern). Although there is no cost, pre-registration is necessary.

## Collectors Club Programs 2021

- Nov. 17** Recessed Issues of Queen Elizabeth II Worldwide  
James P. Gough, Santa Ana, Calif.
- Dec. 1** Jenkins' Express: Dodging the Yanks Along the Rappahannock River  
Patricia Kaufmann, Lincoln, Del.
- Dec. 8** Board of Governors' Open House
- Dec. 8** 3.2 Wine or Fermented Fruit Juice, a Short-Lived Idea, May 1-December 5. 1933
- Jan. 5** Cuban Incoming Mail Before the UPU  
Yamil Kouri, Lexington, Mass.
- Jan. 12** Annual Meeting of the Collectors Club  
Details as they become available, [www.collectorsclub.org](http://www.collectorsclub.org)

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## THE COLLECTORS CLUB

22 East 35th Street, New York, NY 10016  
(212) 683-0559



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# President's Message

By Lawrence Haber

## Let's Get to Know Each Other Better

With the Covid-related cancellation of our 125th anniversary event in November, we are now announcing that our Lichtenstein dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 4th, at the Harvard Club. At that event we'll honor: John Barwis, Mark Banchik, Patrick Maselis and our 2021 selection. In addition, we will be holding our annual single-frame competition at the Clubhouse the day before. It will be a very special couple of days. And, lest you have any doubts, this will happen.

In the last issue of this journal, you read about plans regarding our home at 22 East 35th Street, and our quest for a new home. To briefly update you: 22 East 35th Street has been getting a lot of action, as real estate agents say. On the relocation side of things, we have hired a project manager and architectural firm to help us dimension the requirements, in concrete terms, for our new home. We have also started to explore actual potential sites. This will serve as a tremendous opportunity to reimagine our needs and the purposes to which we put our space.

As we have previously discussed, the Collectors Club plans to have membership social gatherings and talks at more World Series of Philately shows. In the last issue of this journal, I wrote about our Collectors Club sessions at Westpex and the Great American Stamp Show. As I write this, we are looking forward to the joint meeting and program with the Collectors Club of Chicago. This will be a wine and cheese social setting, and I have little doubt that this will be a super event. If you can make it, we hope to see you.

Now, you might ask, why go to all the trouble of traveling from one end of the country to another? The reason is quite simple. One of our prime obligations as a club is to strive to bring people together. We share a common interest: it's philatelic. Once upon a time, this was easy. The center of gravity was in midtown New York City and we gathered together frequently for a program, followed by a dinner. But, this was once upon a time and we can't just get together at the drop of a hat. There are other means and other approaches we have to bring our members together. So, that is why we are trying to hit the road more than in the past.

But there is more to bringing us together than seeing each other at a show or on Zoom. There is more that we can do to bring us together in sharing our common passion. One avenue is within our journal. I thought that it would be an interesting experiment if we started a new series in this journal. That would involve providing a page or two on a single item that is precious, important or evocative for you and sharing it with this audience, telling why this particular item is special to you. It need not necessarily be super expensive; that is not the criteria. This is an exercise focused on what is dear to you and what is special in your eyes. By so doing, I think we will get to know each other better.

Since this is a new endeavor, it is only fair that I expose myself to ridicule and you'll find my item elsewhere in this journal. I would urge you to contribute something yourself. Surprise us!

There is also another concept at work here; namely we want to get more of us into the habit of writing or thinking about writing for this journal. The *Collectors Club Philatelist* is a reflection of our membership and I hope to see more members – not only at shows or online – but in the pages of this journal. It's all part of coming together and sharing our common passion.

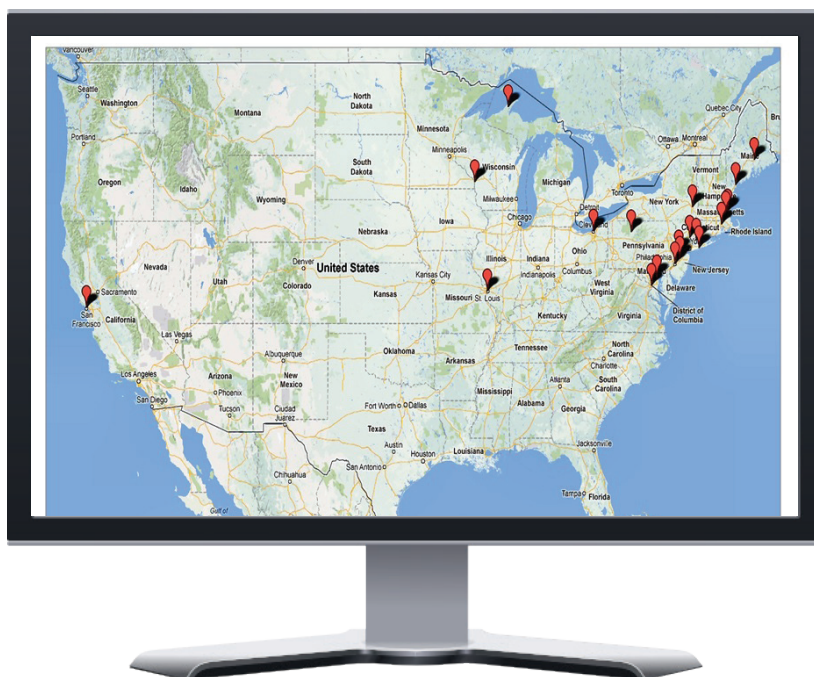
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**Our online resources are timely, helpful,  
interesting and informative.**

**Please spend some time in exploration!**



# Editor's Notepad

by Wayne L. Youngblood

The CCP editorial cupboard remains essentially bare. We do not currently have enough material to publish the January-February issue, although there are a couple of pieces in the works, according to the authors. We need your help.

If you have either been working on an article or have an idea for a feature, please contact me at [wystamps@gmail.com](mailto:wystamps@gmail.com). I will do my best to respond within a reasonable amount of time.

Similarly, if you've submitted an article for publication, but have not seen it published, please contact me as well, on the off chance it may have slipped through the cracks. Occasionally, some specialized pieces must be sent out for review before publishing them to help ensure facts are accurate and assertions or speculations are plausible.

Also, thanks to the efforts of Larry Haber, we begin "Essential Elements" in this issue. This is an occasional feature that spotlights specific items in your collection or exhibit that are important to you – for whatever reason. This is a great way to either let other members know about an unusual item or, perhaps, locate additional examples or information. Plus, it's just plain fun. Other members want to hear from you!

## About Those Counterfeits ...

Also in this issue you'll find a survey of modern (post-2000) U.S. postal counterfeits. What started out as a trickle of counterfeits from China a few years ago is now a continual flood appearing – in some cases – within a few weeks of the appearance of the actual stamp issue – and at steeply discounted prices from face value! The section on high-value counterfeits was prepared by me for the *Philatelic Exporter* in Great Britain when these appeared in September. While none of the counterfeits (in my opinion) are well-enough produced to fool the observant collector, all but a few are certainly good enough to fool most postal employees and casual purchasers of stamps through sources other than the U.S. Postal Service.

While this survey (which begins on page 344) is by no means comprehensive, it does cover enough of the different counterfeits that have appeared in the past few years, as well as their defining characteristics, to give you a good idea of what to look for in your own incoming mail. This is important for several reasons.

As more and more of these counterfeits are being sold, they're beginning to show up in accumulations and legitimate discount postage lots in the secondary market. While they are quite collectible in their own right, you probably do not wish to use them unknowingly as valid postage. In fact, a communication to me from a stamp club (received the day I wrote this) bore a counterfeit Forever stamp as its franking. I know the person who mailed it would never knowingly use counterfeits!

Remember, although mint postal counterfeits are becoming fairly common for many issues, "genuine" postal uses of counterfeits are significant bits of postal history, so finding, documenting and saving these items is important.

# Essential Elements

This month we begin a new occasionally appearing series of short features that spotlight favorite items from members' collections. The criteria by which you choose these items is immaterial. It could be rare, an original discovery, a keystone to an exhibit, an early item from your collection, your favorite item or some philatelic object that simply amuses you.

The goal of this feature is to simply highlight short, interesting editorial nuggets that allow our members to share "special" items and get to know each other and their interests a little bit better. We start off this month with contributions by Larry Haber and Kathy Johnson.

Please consider submitting an occasional item for this ongoing feature.

## Half-Penny Cover

by Lawrence Haber

The technical description here is pretty straightforward: a single ½p 1971 Machin on cover, postmarked Oct. 21, 1972, sent within the British Air Force base at Hong Kong. A more technical description would say that the stamp is printed on original coated paper and has two phosphor bands, its listing in the Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Concise* catalog is X841. Nothing particularly special, right? A very ordinary-looking cover.

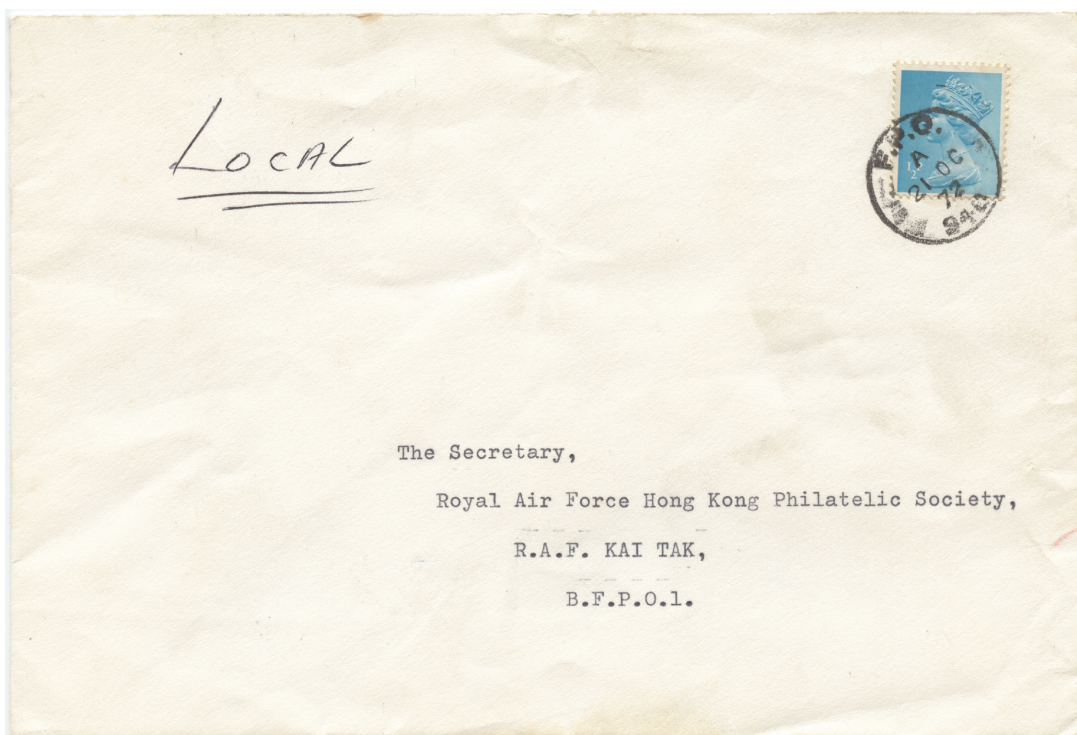
When issued as part of the first set of decimal Machins in early 1971, the ½p Machin's sole purpose was as a makeup value. It could take the old pre-decimal first-class value, a 5d, and raise it to the 2½p needed for second-class service. It could take a 2½p stamp meant for second-class up to the new 3p first-class rate. But, on its own, there was no solo use for the ½p. None.

But, Britain had another post office in addition to its main service. There was the British Forces Post Office, intended to serve the needs of Britain's armed forces, not only in the United Kingdom, but overseas. It offered special rates. For example, a British service person stationed in Germany could mail a letter home to the United Kingdom, not at the usual rate for a letter from Germany, but rather at the inland U.K. rate. And, for a couple of years in the early 1970s, the BFPO offered a rate of ½p for a letter mailed within a single command, within a single base.

I had for some years been collecting Machins and developed an exhibit that was doing okay on the World Series of Philately circuit. I had heard of this solo use, but had never seen one. I was then told of a collector in the United Kingdom who had an example.

When we spoke, I discovered that he had been searching for 30 years for a solo use of the ½p. He had finally found an example, on a postcard. But, much to my frustration, he had sold the item, along with a lot of other material, to another collector just a few weeks before. It seemed I was not likely to get my hands onto a solo use.

Like any number of collectors, I have automated searches running on eBay every day. Frequently, the same old things turn up, week after week, but



sometimes there is something new, something interesting. One day, the cover illustrated nearby popped up. It was in a seven-day auction with a starting price set very low. I did not place a bid just then, as I am a committed sniper.

Here's the definition of a sniper, as it relates to philately:

*3. (in an online auction) place a bid judged to be high enough to win an item just before the bidding is scheduled to close.*

I regularly snipe 10 to five seconds before the end of eBay auctions.

I use an automated tool that places my bid five seconds before the auction's completion time. How much should I bid? There would be no time for a second bid, and this would have to be it. I had one chance at this item, and I decided to go nuclear.

I placed my snipe bid at a number that has now eluded my memory (probably out of a sense of shame). I do, however, recall my bid was four digits; that much I know. But, I figured if you go nuclear, go all the way and leave a wasteland behind you. I knew I wanted this item very much; it would look so perfect in my exhibit and would be one of two known (the only one on an envelope, the other being a postcard). I could see the added points accruing to my exhibit's score.

Finally, the day, the hour came, and the computers did their work. My bid flashed through, and I was the winner at \$5.49! No one else had bid.

My precious and nearly unique item was mine; it now rests in my exhibit and all for the princely sum of \$5.49. Oh, but what I would have paid ...

# Love Those Initials

by Kathryn Johnson

After talking with John Hotchner about one of his exhibits showing all kinds of crazy things that happen to letter mail in processing, he offered to sell me extra covers he had with definitive or standard-issue stamps I was collecting. When I received his great covers and was about to send him a check, he said, "put in an extra \$xx for a little surprise I have for you – only if you want." Well, who could turn that down? I sent the check and received:



This is a Penny Black cover, and the stamp has my initials! It never occurred to me to try to get my initials on a Penny Black, much less one on a cover. I do have a whole stash of Penny Red covers, so that started something ... finding my initials, finding friends' initials and so on. Oh – it may never end!



This one I spotted right away! I'd likely had the cover for five years or so, never taking an interest in the position or letters on the stamp.

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# Civil Internment of Indians in Germany During WWI

Robert Gray

There were about 2.5 million military and civilian prisoners held in Germany during World War I. Of these, only 860 or so were Indian civilians and most of those were *lascars*, i.e., merchant seamen employed by the large German shipping companies, Hansa and Norddeutscher Lloyd. Those in German ports when the war started in August 1914 were considered enemy nationals and put to work primarily in the harbor area or on the ships. By 1916 the lascars were interned in camps. A few Indian students and businessmen in Germany at the time were also interned. Among the Indians not interned were several strongly opposed to British rule.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1. A ¼ Anna PSPC from Bombay to Germany addressed to a lascar c/o the Hansa line.

Indian military prisoners were held at the Halbmondlager (Crescent Moon camp) in Zossen, which had a program to encourage the prisoners to join the Ottoman Jihad against Britain.<sup>2</sup> Zossen and nearby Wundsdorf had large prisoner-of-war camps in addition to the Halbmondlager. The camps holding the civilian lascars included Havelberg, Rhurleben and Zossen.

By 1917 it was the general practice of the Germans to require interned military and civilians to work often in the munition and steel industries. These factory sites included Lubeck, Gutrow, Grossenbaum and several smaller locations. The records of how many lascars were at each location is no longer extant.

Philatelic covers provide physical evidence of the internment of the lascars in Germany. This article examines two covers that help confirm the written record. Figure 1 shows a ¼ Anna domestic postcard addressed to Allisahib Alliba Heuerker, c/o Hansa line, Bremen, Hamburg, Ehrenfels (Hansa line freighter), Hamburg. The cover was canceled at the Bombay G.P.O on Dec. 22, 1915, and then moved to the Foreign section and was canceled again. The cover bears a P.C. (Passed Censor) Post Free/ Prisoner of War hand stamp applied in London. From there it would

1. Roy, Franziska, Heike Liebau, and Ravi Ahuja, 2011, *When the War Began We Heard of Several Kings: South Asian prisoners in World War I Germany*. Chapter 2: South Asian Prisoners of War in the First World War Germany.

2. Gray, R., 2015, "Halbmondlager – the World War One German Jihad Camp," *Collectors Club Philatelist* 94:25-27

Figure 2a. Stamp-less cover addressed to an Indian civilian interned in Germany.



Figure 2b. This cancellation is the only mark on the cover's verso.



have made its way to Germany via a neutral country, such as the Netherlands. The *Ehrenfels* was a German ship, and this lascar was apparently still located there.


Figures 2a and 2b illustrate the front of a cover and a marking from verso, sent from Calcutta's port area of Watgung on Dec. 22, 1916. It was forwarded to Bombay, where it was passed by the censor and marked with a Bombay censor mark. The cover also bears a 1 Anna postage due mark. One half anna domestic rate postage was required by the India Post Office for mail sent to prisoners of war, whether civil or military. The cover would have been sent to London, and apparently no one there wanted to stop this cover for lack of postage. Germany did not have any postage requirement for POW mail.

The cover is addressed to Abdul Latif Tundel/ Civil Indian War prisoner/ N° 4922/ *Kriegsgefangenen Sendung* (prisoner-of-war message) / Zossen (town near Berlin and site of a POW camps). The latter two words were crossed out and on the left side of the cover the city "Lubeck" is in manuscript. The cover tells the story that this civilian was believed to be at Zossen in late 1916, but he had already been transferred to work at the steel furnace at Lubeck. The two blue Xs and pencil 362 may have been marks made at the London War Office. There is a faint *Gepuft* (checked) handstamp, indicating that the cover did arrive in Germany.

The literacy among the lascars was very low, perhaps less than 5%, and covers to them are understandably rare. I would be very grateful for scans of any additional Indian civil internee covers. Please send to [robertgray@me.com](mailto:robertgray@me.com).

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# Mail in Central America

## under the Mexican Empire (1821-23)

by Guillermo Federico Gallegos

*This article was originally published in ACADEMVS No. 22, May 2018. ACADEMVS is the journal of the Royal Hispanic Academy of Philately and Postal History ([www.rahf.es/](http://www.rahf.es/)). We thank that organization for consenting to translate this article to English:*

An almost forgotten episode in the history of both Mexico and Central America is the brief period of the First Mexican Empire under Agustín de Iturbide (1821-23), and its annexation of the former Kingdom of Guatemala (a Spanish colony comprised of Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica). With this incorporation, Mexico achieved its largest geographical extension, going from Oregon to Panama, although it only lasted 18 months.

As historians in either Mexico or Central America have not delved deeply into the general events of the First Mexican Empire, its postal history remains even less studied. Therefore, this article aims to present an introduction to the postal history of this period from the Central American perspective, with the idea of generating awareness and further discussion about it.



Postage stamp issued in 1921 depicting Iturbide's entrance into Mexico City. (Courtesy of Fernando Perez Maldonado).

### Historical Context

The Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808 encouraged the creation of Government Juntas, both in Spain and the Indies, whose purpose was to

maintain governance until the return of the genuine Spanish authorities. The development of these Juntas in each territory was influenced significantly by the local interests, controlled by the creoles (Spanish descendants born in America) and their desire of achieving more or less autonomy. While regions such as Buenos Aires and Venezuela were aiming for total independence as early as 1810, other colonies, especially New Spain (Mexico), Peru and the Kingdom of Guatemala, had opposing views about it for many years.

In New Spain the creoles, mainly in Mexico City, initially



Coat of Arms of the Mexican Empire (1822).

joined forces with the Spanish authorities to prevent the victory of the popular rebellion, first lead by Miguel Hidalgo and, afterwards, by Jose Maria Morelos. By 1821, the war of independence in Mexico was almost over, with the nearly complete victory of the Spanish (or Royalist) authorities. However, the year before, a coup in Spain had forced King Ferdinand VII to accept the 1812 Cadiz Constitution, which was deemed too liberal for some conservative circles in Mexico.

Because of this, a new conspiracy was planned to create an independent kingdom in the New Spain, with its crown to be offered to a Spanish prince. One of its leaders was Agustin de Iturbide, a retired officer of the Royalist army that had been fairly successful during the first years of the war against the rebels.

On Feb. 4, 1821, Iturbide met with the rebel leader, Vicente Guerrero, to agree on the peace terms. Some days later, on Feb. 24, Iturbide proclaimed the *Plan de Iguala* (the Iguala Plan), where he stated three guarantees: (1) Independence of New Spain under a constitutional monarchy, initially offered to Ferdinand VII; (2) the Union of Mexicans and Spanish and (3) Catholicism as the official religion.

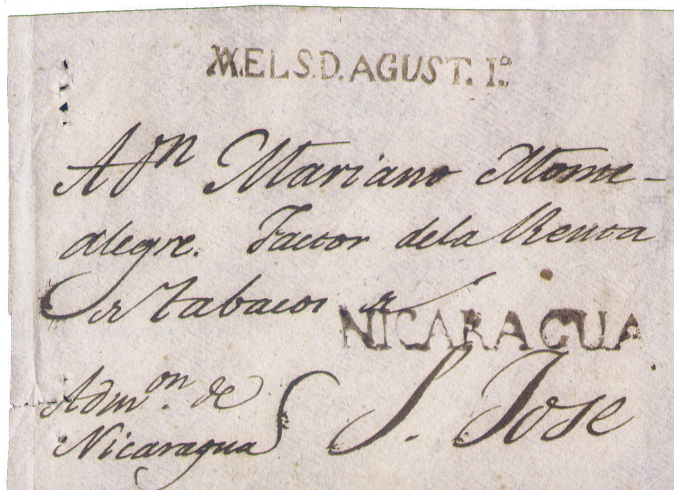
After a few battles between the Royalists and the rebel "Army of the Three Guarantees," Iturbide and the Viceroy Juan de O'Donoju met in Cordoba, Veracruz, on Aug. 24 to sign the *Treaty of Cordoba*, where Mexico became independent under the terms of the *Plan de Iguala*. On Sept. 27, Iturbide and his army entered Mexico City, completing independence. A few months later, Iturbide was crowned as emperor.



Patriotic marking supporting independence used in Comayagua (Honduras) in 1821 (Sergio Bendeck Collection).

The creoles in the Kingdom of Guatemala followed the example set by New Spain and supported the Captain General against any independence attempt, mainly to maintain their privileges and commercial rights. As a result, there was no significant independence movement in the region. The only challenges in San Salvador (1811 and 1814) and Nicaragua (1811) were quickly suppressed by the Spanish authorities so, in 1821, the Kingdom of Guatemala was still one of the few Spanish colonies unaffected by the independence wars. Nevertheless, as in Mexico, the reinstatement of the 1812 Constitution in Spain affected the interests of the regional economic and religious elites.

By September 1821, the majority of Spanish America was already independent, including the viceroys of New Spain (Mexico) and New Granada (Colombia), which were in the borders of the Kingdom of Guatemala. In these circumstances, it became clear that the territory could not maintain its status as a Spanish



Patriotic marking supporting Iturbide used in the town of Nicaragua (currently Rivas) in 1822 (courtesy of Spink Shreves Galleries).

colony. The final push for autonomy was on Sept. 14, when news arrived in Guatemala City that several towns in Chiapas had adhered to the *Plan de Iguala*, and that a Mexican army was on its way to Guatemala City. Considering these threats, Captain General Gabino Gainza organized an emergency meeting with representatives of the six provinces (Chiapas, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica) for Sept. 15.

This meeting ended with the proclamation of independence of Central America.

Despite all the proclamations, not much changed after Sept. 15. The colonial authorities mostly kept their appointments and only a provisional advisory committee was formed to support Gainza as chief of the new government. Upon independence, Central America was an impoverished region, with barely any resources required for effective government, and with local elites more focused on reducing subordination to Guatemala than on liberation from Spain.

*Letter sent in 1823 from Guatemala to Vicente Filisola, inscribed to the "Gral. En Jefe del Ejército de Operaciones Mexicanos" (General in Chief of the Mexican Army) while he was besieging San Salvador. The letter has the official marking "MINISTERIO DE GUERRA Y MARINA" (War and Navy Ministry) and a Guatemala prepaid marking. (Collection of James Mazepa).*



**Letters sent from El Salvador during the Mexican Empire Period:**

Right: Letter sent from San Miguel to Tegucigalpa in 1822 when this city was formally part of Mexican Empire.

Below right: Letter sent from San Vicente to Tegucigalpa in 1822 when this city and San Salvador were in rebellion against the union with Mexico.

Considering these circumstances, the idea of integrating with the Mexican Empire became a good option, as Mexico was considered a rich, stable country that would provide the necessary resources for an economic recovery and would neutralize Guatemala's influence.

Comayagua (Honduras) and Leon (Nicaragua) were the first towns that adhered to the *Plan de Iguala* between September and October 1821. Simultaneously, for

opposing reasons, Guatemala also became interested in the union, as its leaders understood the difficulty of maintaining their regional status quo and saw Mexico as a substitute of the former colonial power that would help maintain it. As a result of these circumstances, the formal annexation to Mexico was proclaimed on Jan. 5, 1822.

While several cities in the region were ambivalent about the annexation to Mexico, the major resistance came from San Salvador and San Vicente, both at the time in El Salvador. In San Salvador there was a group that initially supported the union, but eventually the general perception was that being part of Mexico would only perpetuate the economic subordination to Guatemala, so an army was organized to resist the annexation. Guatemala and the Salvadorian towns of Santa Ana and San Miguel sent troops to counter the rebellion, but they were defeated. To finish it, Iturbide sent an army under Gen. Vicente Filisola, who also became the head of the Guatemalan government on June 23, 1822. The Mexican army sieged San Salvador, and finally captured it on Feb. 9, 1823, proclaiming its formal annexation to the Mexican Empire.

However, Filisola's victory was brief, as Iturbide's position in Mexico had considerably weakened in the previous months. On March 19, 1823, he was forced to abdicate, and the Mexican Republic was proclaimed. Filisola decided to return to Mexico, but first he organized a congress to decide the future of Central



America. It met in Guatemala on June 29, 1823, and on July 1, it proclaimed the total independence of Central America from Spain, Mexico and all other countries. The new country was named Provincias Unidas del Centro de América (United Provinces of Central America), being formed by Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Chiapas decided to remain part of Mexico, and the Soconusco, a territory between Chiapas and Guatemala, formed part of the union until it requested to be incorporated into Mexico in 1840.

### Mail in Central America under the Mexican Empire

Reconstructing the postal history of Central America under the Mexican Empire is challenging, as there are few records due to the volatile situation and very scarce postal items that can be determined to have been genuinely used at the time.

Considering the political turbulence between 1821 and 1823, both the Mexican Imperial Government and the Guatemalan provisional authorities opted for maintaining most of the postal system inherited from Spain with minimal possible changes, and functioning with the available resources. Mexico maintained most of the clauses of the Spanish 1794 postal ordinance, and this extended to Central America. The Spanish maritime mail routes departing from Mexico and Central America obviously ended in 1821, as Spain did not recognize the independence of its former colonies, so mail to Europe or the United States had to be sent onboard merchant ships that arrived at Mexican or Central American ports.

The 1814 mail rate, the last tariff defined by Spanish authorities, was maintained during the Mexican Empire:

Rate per weight / Origin	From Central America, Yucatan, Tabasco, Northern Mexico, West Indies, New Orleans	From Central Mexico	From Spain, Peru, Manila, Caracas, Santa Fe de Bogotá
Single letter of less than half an <i>Onza</i>	3 reales	2 reales	4 reales
Double of half an <i>Onza</i> , less than $\frac{3}{4}$	4 reales	3 reales	6 reales
Triple of $\frac{3}{4}$ , less than 1 <i>Onza</i>	6 reales	4 reales	8 reales
For each one <i>Onza</i> (up to Five <i>Onzas</i> )	8 reales	6 reales	12 reales
Each additional <i>Onza</i> (above 5 & up to 10 <i>Onzas</i> )	4 reales	4 reales	12 reales
Each additional <i>Onza</i> (above 10 & up to 20 <i>Onzas</i> )	2 reales	2 reales	12 reales
Each additional <i>Onza</i> (Above 20 & up to 40 <i>Onzas</i> )	1 real	1 real	12 reales
Each additional <i>Onza</i> (above 40 <i>Onzas</i> )	$\frac{1}{2}$ real	$\frac{1}{2}$ real	12 reales

*Mail rates of 1814. Northern Mexico was considered to be New Biscay, Coahuila, Sonora and the Californias. Central Mexico was considered to be Veracruz, Oaxaca, Puebla, Mexico, Valladolid, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas and Guadalajara.*

Miguel de Ateaga, the last colonial postmaster since 1796, was initially kept as postal administrator for the Central American provinces. Due to his death, Antonio Batres y Naxera took over the position in 1822, and was mentioned as responsible for the postal service in Central America in reports and documents prepared during November and December 1822.

In 1822, there were 52 post offices in Central America. All of them had been functioning since the colonial era, but due to independence, the majority of them stopped reporting their earnings to the central office in Guatemala, causing serious economic issues. The 1822 report, the only complete year under the Mexican Empire, states that the postal service in Central America had a deficit of 59,169  $\frac{1}{4}$  reales.

The conflict with San Salvador forced the change of the main mail route in Central America, the Carrera de Leon. The original route departed from Guatemala City to Leon in Nicaragua, going through the Salvadorian cities of Santa Ana, San Salvador, San Vicente and San Miguel, to be able to enter Nicaragua through El Viejo up to Leon. All the other routes in the territory were connected and subordinated to it. Therefore, as San Salvador and San Vicente were in rebellion in 1822, Batres y Najera ordered that the foot couriers depart from Guatemala on the 2nd and 22nd of each month to Chiquimula (Guatemala), then to los Llanos in Honduras and San Miguel, from where the Carrera de Leon followed the usual route. The couriers had to return to Guatemala on the 2nd and 17th of each month to connect with the courier to Oaxaca, which was the main communication route between Central America and Mexico.

The route from Guatemala to Oaxaca was twice per month during the colonial period. Batres y Najera proposed on July 3, 1822, to increase the number of couriers to three per month to improve the communication with the Imperial government in Mexico. This request was approved until Dec. 31, 1822, setting the departure dates on the 1st, 10th and 20th of each month, and returning to Guatemala on the 17th, 26th and 6th (of the following month). This new frequency was announced in Guatemala in February 1823, a few weeks before the end of the Mexican Empire. With the independence of Central America, the couriers to Oaxaca returned to two per month in July 1823.

As the annexation to Mexico lasted less than 18 months, the number of surviving covers from this period must be very small, especially considering that the only way to identify them is through the date of use or the title of the receiver, as the postal markings were the same from the colonial period. This represents an additional difficulty, as most of the known pre-stamp items from Central America are fronts and not complete letters. The two items known from El Salvador illustrated in this article have been identified thanks to the date.



There are only three markings prepared during this period, and all reflect the political changes happening at the time: The marking "Viva la Yndependencia," (long live independence) used in Comayagua (Honduras) in 1821; the marking "VA EL S. D. AGUST. 1°." (Viva el Señor Don

*Official marking with the Imperial Coat of Arms and the legend "CAPITANIA GENERAL DE GUATEMALA."*



Letter sent in 1822 from Guatemala City to Chimaltenango with the official marking depicting the Imperial Coat of Arms and the legend "CAPITANIA GENERAL DE GUATEMALA" and the prepaid cancel *Franqueado en Guatemala* (James Mazepa Collection).

Agustin 1° used in the town of Nicaragua (currently Rivas) in 1822; and an official marking prepared by the Imperial government with the Imperial Coat of Arms and the legend "CAPITANIA GENERAL DE GUATEMALA" (Guatemala Captaincy General), used in Guatemala City during 1822. All the known items are practically unique.

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More information about the postal history of Central America under the Mexican Empire can be consulted in the book *The Prestamp Period of El Salvador (1525-1866)*, published by the Collectors Club of Chicago ([www.collectorsclubchicago.org/](http://www.collectorsclubchicago.org/)). Other sources used for this article were:

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*My thanks to Spink Shreves Galleries, Sergio Bendeck, James Mazepa and Fernando Perez Maldonado for sharing images for this article.*

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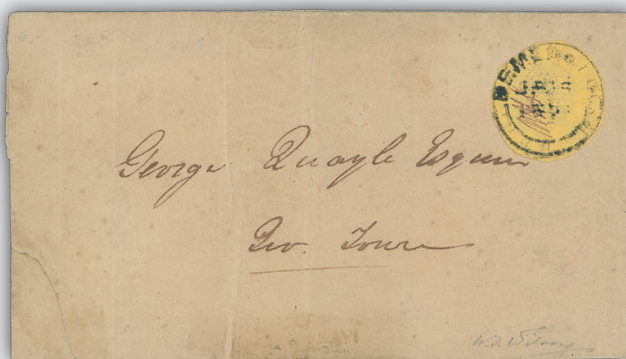
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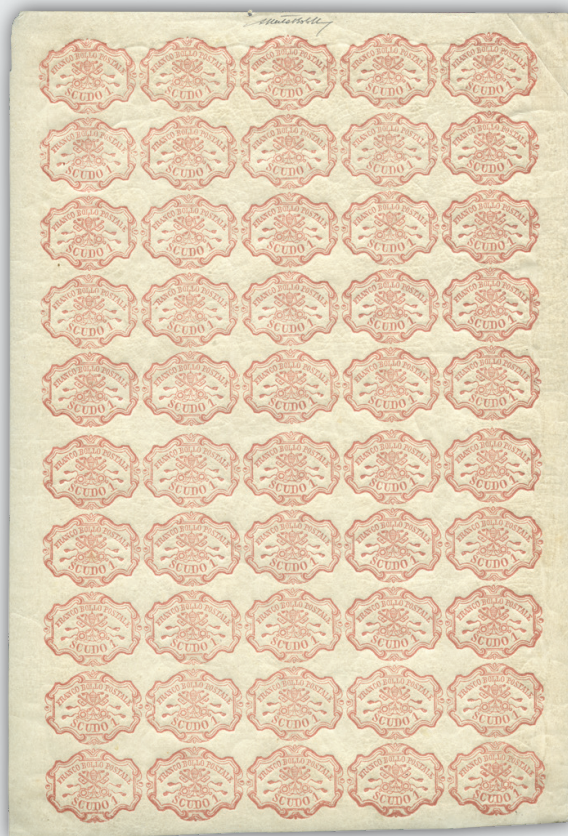
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# A Brief Analysis of Modern U.S. Postal Counterfeit Stamps

by Wayne L. Youngblood

For more than 30 years, postal counterfeits have captured my attention. And, at least until recently, they have always been fairly scarce and extremely collectible. But with the recent advancements in offset printing, global distribution and some level of chaos within the United States Postal Service, postal counterfeits from China, specifically, have become almost ubiquitous, being brazenly offered on eBay, Amazon and even through social media sites, such as Facebook. Some purveyors of counterfeits have even started websites devoted specifically to selling them. A screenshot from one of these sites is shown below.



*A recent screenshot from a website featuring counterfeit U.S. stamps at huge discounts from face. Even this year's Espresso Drinks stamps (released April 9) have already been counterfeited!*

Before taking a deeper dive into this seamy underbelly of modern philately, let's take a moment to define exactly what it is we're talking about. Postal counterfeits are quite distinct from their fake and forgery cousins, even though terminology is frequently confused.

**Fake.** Of the three commonly used terms for similar items (fakes, forgeries and counterfeits), fakes are arguably the least desirable, other than from a reference standpoint. Faked stamps are usually genuine, but with



*Faked perforations have been added to the right side.*

alterations. These alterations include removing or adding design elements, adding or removing cancellations, trimming or adding perforations, regumming, altering or adding overprints or surcharges and many other repairs or alterations. Almost without exception, the creation of fakes is meant to simulate a more valuable variety to deceive the unwary collector.

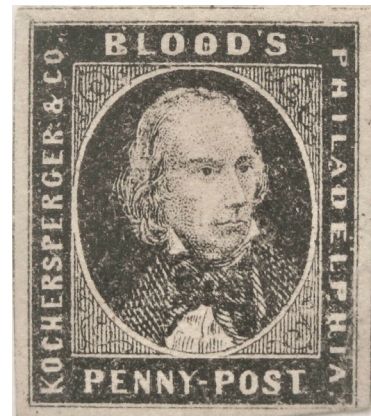
**Forgery.** A forgery is an unmarked (usually) reproduction or fabrication of a real stamp (frequently scarce) that is intended to fool collectors. The intent can be as benign as a practical joke or as sinister as bilking a collector out of thousands of dollars. Numerous common forgeries also exist. These were created to fill large demand for supposedly common worldwide stamps for use in packets and mixtures. Most of these so-called packet forgeries were created during the early part of the 20th century and, in many cases, the forgery is more common than the actual stamp.

Forgeries can be very realistic or very crude, and some are very highly collectible. Those created by some of the “masters,” such as Sperati, can frequently sell for more than the genuine stamp they mimic! Others would fool very few and are intended solely for the purpose of filling spaces.

**Postal counterfeit.** A postal counterfeit is a contemporaneously fabricated copy of a real stamp, created specifically to defraud a postal administration of revenue. Until fairly recently, a postal counterfeit could be identified fairly easily by its relatively crude appearance compared to a genuine stamp. Both the printing (frequently different than the original) and the perforations (if any) really do not usually look much like the real thing. However, recent advances in technology have allowed counterfeiters – particularly the new generation of Chinese counterfeiters – to create much more convincing items. So far, without exception, modern postal counterfeits do not have phosphorescent tagging, making them extremely easy to identify under shortwave ultraviolet light, even if most other details are nearly perfect.

Because counterfeiting is a federal offense and copies found at the time of investigations are usually confiscated, postal counterfeits have been historically quite scarce and desirable to collectors. Postally used counterfeits, or those still on cover, usually sell for many times the price of those that are collected as unused examples.

Until recently, counterfeiting of postage stamps was almost never done as a stand-alone crime because the relative profitability of such a venture was almost always outweighed by the relative risk of being caught. This crime



*An early forged local post stamp (Blood's Penny Post).*



*An early U.S. postal counterfeit, the so-called Chicago counterfeit of U.S. Scott 250.*

was almost always part of a different (and larger) criminal offense. With few exceptions (at least in the United States), counterfeits are generally mimicking whatever is the then-current first-class stamp. Unless a counterfeit is part of an active, ongoing investigation, collectors really do not have to worry about their stamps being confiscated, contrary to writings of Herman "Pat" Herst and others. Herst regularly (and wrongly) wrote about how authorities would break your door down in the dead of night and confiscate your entire collection if you had any counterfeits, leaving many collectors too terrified to collect or study them.

In 2013, the Scott *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* began listing postal counterfeits. The section is regularly updated and expanded as needed and, with the new 2022 edition, lists several hundred different U.S. postal counterfeits in great detail (with several varieties of a number of them). The vast majority have appeared in the past 15 years.

Indeed, within the past four years alone, almost every regular-issue stamp and several commemoratives have been counterfeited, and virtually all of them have originated in China. This is not simple supposition. I have had contact with "resellers," and even larger distributors (or wholesalers). Several shipments have come directly from China, while others have come from senders with distinctly Chinese names. Without exception, all roads have led to China. I have seen absolutely no evidence that modern U.S. postal counterfeits have originated from any other country.

For many years, counterfeiting postage stamps was not a profitable crime. Those postal counterfeits that were created and discovered (usually in very small quantities) were invariably part of larger crimes, such as currency counterfeiting, money laundering and even child pornography. But in recent years China has gotten into the act in a big way, distributing huge numbers of counterfeits

through eBay and other online sources as discount postage. These, in turn, are frequently repacked in smaller quantities and resold by unknowing dupes. In most cases, secondary or tertiary purchasers are not aware they are buying and using counterfeit postage stamps. One of the more common outlets includes the tiny neighborhood stores in cities known as bodegas. Due to the rapid and broad distribution of these items, they are very hard to trace, and leads often go cold before a trans-oceanic connection can be made.

From 1894-2003, there were only about 30 different known postal counterfeits of U.S. postage stamps, and not all of these are even known in private hands. When I worked with the Postal Inspection Service on

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several cases, inspectors shared the organization's own collection with me, which I was allowed to photograph and write about in the late 1980s-early '90s (the source of images for several later writers, as well as Scott listings). The existence of several of these postal counterfeits was previously unknown.

Since 2004, however, there have been more than 150 additional types reported! This includes about 25 different for the 2017 Stars & Stripes Forever stamp alone (Scott 5158, 5159 and 5161), as well as an additional whopping 69 varieties reported for the 2018 Folded Flag in several formats (Scott 5260-5263).

### Where are the Authorities?

And why are these cases not being investigated and prosecuted by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service? The answer is complicated and convoluted.

First, it's not exactly fair to say the authorities are not investigating; they are, but the scope and reach of this criminal activity (as mentioned in the introduction) is staggering. Let's take a look at a brief potential scenario:

As mentioned earlier, without exception (so far), all postal counterfeits have no phosphorescent tagging. This means that they should not be able to trigger the automated equipment in post offices and should be automatically rejected, submitting any covers bearing them to manual inspection.

We'll pretend a postal clerk in oh, I don't know, Keokuk, Iowa, happened to identify a postal counterfeit that was rejected by equipment and that she turns it over to the postal inspectors for follow-up.

The first line of investigation would be to check on both the addressee and sender. The addressee likely doesn't know anything and is innocent, but the sender actually used the counterfeit, so there are questions to be asked, even though a

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smart criminal would never knowingly use counterfeits on mail (indeed, most of those who “wholesale” counterfeits use online postage payment methods). Still, the first question is, “Where did you purchase these stamps?”

If the user of these stamps even remembers where they were purchased, the trail is already growing cold. In many cases, the user either thought he or she was buying discount postage or simply purchased the stamps from a bodega or small convenience store. Remember, few people who are noncollectors either buy or stockpile postage in any quantity.

If the stamps were purchased from an eBay or other online seller, an investigation can follow up there and at least shut down that particular distributor. If the stamps were purchased from a small business, that business likely purchased them from (again) eBay or a discount postage website, not knowing the stamps were counterfeit. Either way, the trail leads to one of these larger distributors, most of whom probably have a good idea what they’re selling, but not necessarily.

Even if authorities were to push hard and gain information, the trail always goes cold when the jump is made across the ocean to China; it’s exceedingly difficult to locate, catch or prosecute the creators, and the distribution networks have become so broad that following any single lead is like stepping on a single ant from a teeming anthill. In theory, the Postal Inspection Service could prosecute some of these cases, but what is to be gained? It does not stop the illegal activity; it merely shifts it elsewhere.

At a point it’s not worth expending large amounts of resources to scare otherwise innocent people paying their gas bills or proprietors of small bodegas or convenience stores, neither of which likely has any idea the stamps they’re using aren’t real.

It’s not that the USPS doesn’t care; it does. After all, it is losing millions of dollars a year to counterfeiting at this point (about \$200 million by its own estimate). But I think the postal organization has realized there is little to be gained for resources expended. Think about it; USPS could easily spend millions of dollars pursuing multiple offenders and attempting to prosecute what is ultimately an unstoppable crime. Either way, it’s a tough position in which to be.

### **Detailed Analysis of a Few Counterfeits**

It is not the purpose of this article to present a comprehensive listing and analysis of all modern U.S. postal counterfeits, but by examining a few in detail, you will have the knowledge and ability to spot them quickly and efficiently, whether it’s that booklet of stamps you just brought home from the store or for collecting and studying those that come in on business or personal mail. Despite the fact that most modern postal counterfeits are far from scarce, postally used examples on cover or on parcel piece are still highly desirable! More importantly, for our purposes, modern counterfeits are being used – a lot. Locating and securing postal uses of these items will document this interesting chapter of philately. It is a good thing to keep informed and know what to look for.

Arbitrarily, we’ll start with a 2014 issue.



## Flag & Fireworks (Scott 4854)

There are 10 different counterfeit types known, with serpentine die-cut perforations measuring either 9½ or 11.2 (rather than the 11.1 of the original).

Like most counterfeits, there is an overall lack of detail and no phosphorescent tagging. In the variety illustrated, there are some missing stars and uneven stripes on the flag and absolutely no evidence of the microprinting that should appear in the fireworks. The points of the die-cuts are sharper than one would see on a genuine example.

### 2015 Love (Scott 4955-4956)

Like the Flag & Fireworks coil, the counterfeit Love stamps have die cuts that measure 11.2, rather than 11, and there is no tagging. On the red stamp, the “2015” year date that’s supposed to appear in the upper right corner is virtually indistinguishable from the red background. The “USA•FOREVER” inscription at bottom is much thicker than on genuine examples. Counterfeits have strong rouletting between each stamp and the die-cutting on the stamps themselves is frequently poor or partially missing, making them difficult to separate. Three different types of this counterfeit have been noted.



### 2015 Vintage Rose (Scott 4959)

The Vintage Rose stamp is perhaps one of the most easily spotted of the modern postal counterfeits. The genuine stamp (left and inset) was produced by



a combination of line-engraved intaglio and offset lithography. On genuine stamps, the engraving lines are crisp and clear. On the counterfeits (right and inset) these lines are more like a muddy dot pattern. Still, the “lined” areas are slightly raised to the touch, perhaps a form of thermographic ink. At first glance, the die-cut pattern



also does not match genuine examples. Three slightly different types have been reported.

As with the others, there is no phosphorescent tagging.

The troubling nature of these modern counterfeits is that casual observation of the stamps is deceptive – particularly to noncollectors or harried postal clerks. The printing quality is fair, the die-cutting is convincing and most of the plate and marginal markings all appear genuine. Some of these counterfeits are highly fluorescent, which can fool some machinery (a fact that the USPS is loath to admit). An added complication is the fact that, although the Postal Inspection Service takes this crime seriously, there currently appears to be little field concern for revenue protection within the USPS, whether it is making sure stamps are canceled or making an effort to identify counterfeit stamps – something concerning to headquarters but with very little apparent trickle-down effect.

While mint counterfeits are certainly collectible (and sometimes valuable), postally used examples are typically quite scarce. This cannot be stressed enough from a collecting standpoint. But let's return to our survey.

### For The Birds: 2015 Coastal Birds Postcard Rate (Scott 4991-4994)

Breaking tradition with the standard "first-class only" counterfeits, a new and rather convincing postal counterfeit appeared several years ago in panes of 20 of the 2015 Coastal Birds postcard-rate Forever stamps. Like the originals, the counterfeits are die-cut self-adhesive stamps and, although there are many different ways to distinguish them from genuine examples, they are pretty good at first glance, although the counterfeit (above right) is slightly "softer" or blurrier in appearance. More on this in a bit.

What was particularly apparent about these stamps is that as the parade of postal counterfeits continues from China, the quality seems to get better. This, of course, is very concerning to the U.S. Postal Service, which is having a very hard time tracing and prosecuting overseas producers.

As mentioned earlier, in times past, counterfeiting itself was not a profitable activity, given the potential risk versus benefit. Instead, it was usually part of a larger crime, such as counterfeiting currency or drug trafficking. But with modern off-the-shelf higher-tech printing and processing equipment, it has become much easier to create convincing examples of modern stamps very inexpensively.

Why use prime-rate stamps, instead of others (such as the postcard rate)? This is done for two reasons. First, traveling with a much larger mail volume, counterfeit stamps of prime rates attract far less attention or scrutiny than odd or unusual denominations. As a practical consideration, they are also far easier to distribute than something with less demand, such as postcard-rate stamps.

What is highly unusual about the Coastal Bird counterfeits is that they represented postage for the then-current postcard rate of 35¢. Postcards make up a fairly small part of our nation's mail volume, so why counterfeit them? My guess is that they were thought to be "just normal" Forever stamps (first-class rate). This becomes apparent with an international-rate Forever stamp described later in this article. Predictably, there is only one type of these counterfeits currently reported, unlike most others.



So, what are the primary differences between the genuine and counterfeit versions?

- The “perforations” on the genuine stamps measure 11 on a standard perforation gauge; the counterfeits measure about 8½.
- The paper of the counterfeits is noticeably thinner than that used on the genuine examples.
- The microprinted “USPS” inscription is almost illegible on the counterfeits (see inset above).
- There is no phosphorescent tagging on the counterfeits (as always).
- The appearance of the printing is rougher, or “blurrier” by comparison (under magnification).
- The “USA” at upper left is bolder on the counterfeit and the “2015” at upper right is black instead of gray.
- On the reverse (not shown) there is no bar code and there are typefont differences.

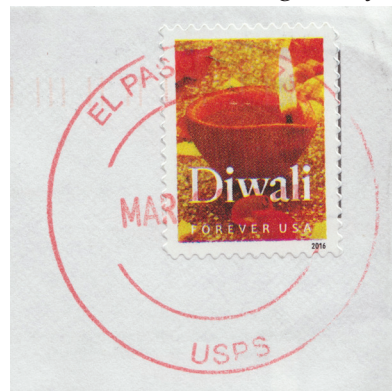


This is one of the very few postal counterfeits I have not yet seen legitimately (or illegitimately) used on postcard. If you encounter one in the mail, please leave it on cover or card, as they are highly collectible. Once again (as always), there is no phosphorescent tagging on these stamps. Genuine tagged stamps glow a bright yellow green under shortwave ultraviolet light (not longwave).

### Diwali Postal Counterfeit

This counterfeit, the non-denominated (49¢) Diwali Forever stamp, shown nearby photographically cropped from a cover postmarked March 28, 2017, from the small Illinois town of El Paso, is an interesting one. El Paso, Ill., of course, is not the point of origin of any postal counterfeits, rather it is simply one of the hundreds of communities affected by them as they are sold online through eBay and other sources and then resold through smaller (usually ignorant) resellers.

Among the specific differences between the counterfeit Diwali stamps and genuine examples is a slightly coarser-appearing printing and, while the overall appearance of the counterfeits is slightly washed-out, the “2016” date on the counterfeits is much darker and bolder than on the genuine examples. There are also some small die-cutting differences.



### Skywriting Love Counterfeits

During mid-August 2017, another new postal counterfeit began appearing on eBay in the form of discount postage. This time it was the (49¢) Forever

Skywriting Love stamp. Like other recent postal counterfeits, the self-adhesive and die-cutting technology is fairly sophisticated and could fool the average non-collecting buyer. But, like every other postal counterfeit to date, there is no phosphorescent coating on either the stamp or the paper, so it is very simply detected by that alone.

Other important diagnostics include a much coarser printing than the genuine examples (see illustration, counterfeit at



right), as well as a missing “L” in the “United States Postal Service” logo on the reverse of full panes (not shown). Otherwise, the color and die-cutting nearly match the originals.

### Love Flourishes .. Except When it’s Fake ...

Not long after the release of the Love Flourishes stamp on Jan. 18, 2018, dealer Dave Katz provided details and images of this counterfeit, shown nearby. In this case the counterfeits are printed on paper that is glossier than the originals (particularly noticeable on the backing paper) but – other than that and no phosphorescent tagging – these stamps seem visually very close to the originals. They would certainly fool virtually any non-collector. The die-cut perforations are very similar and even the microprinting is legible, which was unusual until this issue.

As a philatelic journalist, there have been significant consequences to the rash of postal counterfeits the past few years.

According to one high-placed USPS spokesman (responding to my complaints about the quality of images of new issues provided for publication), USPS is no





longer providing true high-resolution images outside the agency, as it fears they are being used to create these high-quality counterfeits. This is a bit of a fallacy, as certain details, such as the microprinting, would certainly be visible in the finished product if counterfeiters used hi-res images from the USPS. It is clear they are using scans of actual postage stamps and manipulating them to some extent with software. Still, the USPS' concern is understandable.

As long as there is a market – and the inability to get to the principal offenders – I see no cessation of the appearance of convincing postal counterfeits in the foreseeable future.

### Finally, High-Value Counterfeits: It Had to Happen

I knew it would happen eventually.

As of mid-September, four convincing postal counterfeits, including two different international-rate Forever stamps (currently \$1.30), a \$7.95 Priority Mail rate issue and a \$26.55 Express Mail rate stamp have all shown up through various distribution sources as “discounted postage,” again, being sold at significantly less than face value. The only surprise to me is that it took so long for high-value stamps to be counterfeited although, as I’ve frequently pointed out, non prime-rate stamps are historically harder to distribute and lend themselves more readily to closer inspection by authorities. Although reports of new counterfeits are getting a bit tiresome at this point (and on-cover uses more common), postal uses of any of these high-value hoaxes would be very desirable and would best be left on cover or parcel piece with cancellation intact.

As mentioned earlier, it’s always been extremely difficult to create convincing counterfeits (particularly when stamps were engraved), which made the risk of discovery and prosecution enough of a deterrent to keep most away from counterfeiting.

All that changed a few years ago.

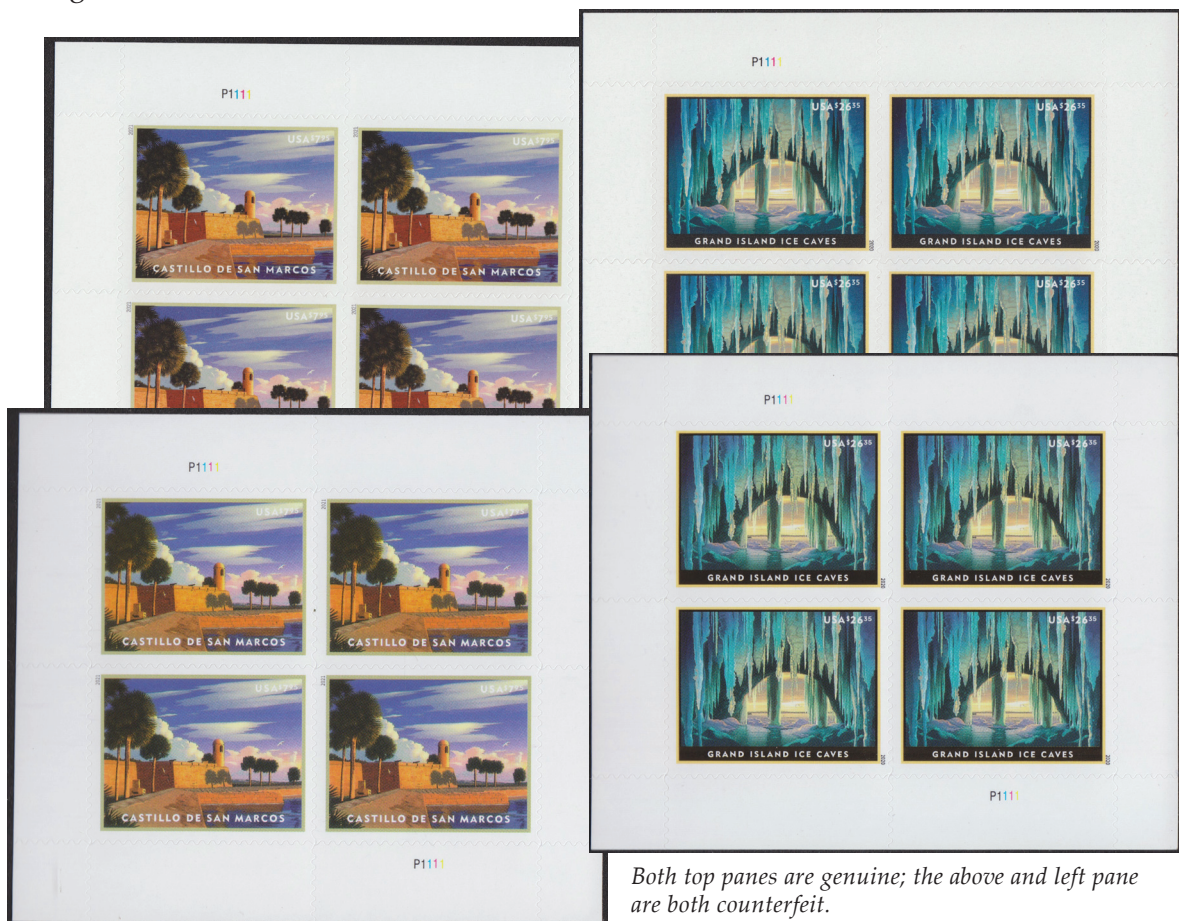
The perfect storm of cheaply printed offset-lithography stamps, the advent of Forever stamps (which will always be worth the current letter rate), huge

advances in “off-the-shelf” printing technology and a ready and accessible worldwide market have created a hugely profitable niche for Chinese counterfeiters – particularly since the Chinese still enjoy “developing nation” status in trade negotiations.

Initially, discounts for counterfeits by online sellers were small. Some were sold either at face value or for a 5%-10% discount. Quantity purchases ranged from 10%-25% off, to help avoid raising suspicion, but as the distributors of these fakes have become bolder, the discounts have become steeper. Current discounts (even for small quantities) now range anywhere from 50%-75% off – even more when large quantities are purchased. There are even a couple of websites devoted to “discount postage.” These stamps, if genuine (which they clearly are not), could not be discounted this steeply without being stolen, which is also illegal last time I checked. Nonetheless, they seem to be easily accessible and operating seemingly freely. Even by my own somewhat limited sampling, I’m seeing more counterfeits show up on non-philatelic commercial mail.

### Priority Mail and Express Mail Counterfeits

Both of these issues, likely produced by the same source, are found in mini-sheetlets of four stamps, just like the genuine examples. Sheetlets of each are shown on the facing page. At a casual glance, the fakes (bottom) almost look better than the genuine stamps. The printing is a little brighter with slightly higher contrast, and the counterfeits



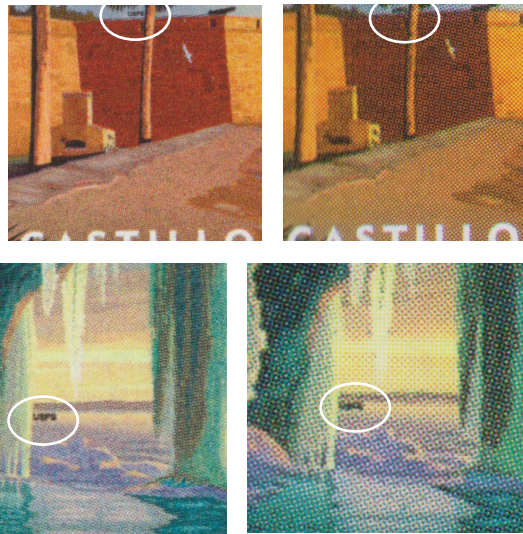
*Both top panes are genuine; the above and left pane are both counterfeit.*

are produced on a slightly glossier paper, giving them a crisper appearance than the genuine stamps. But first impressions do not hold up under magnification.

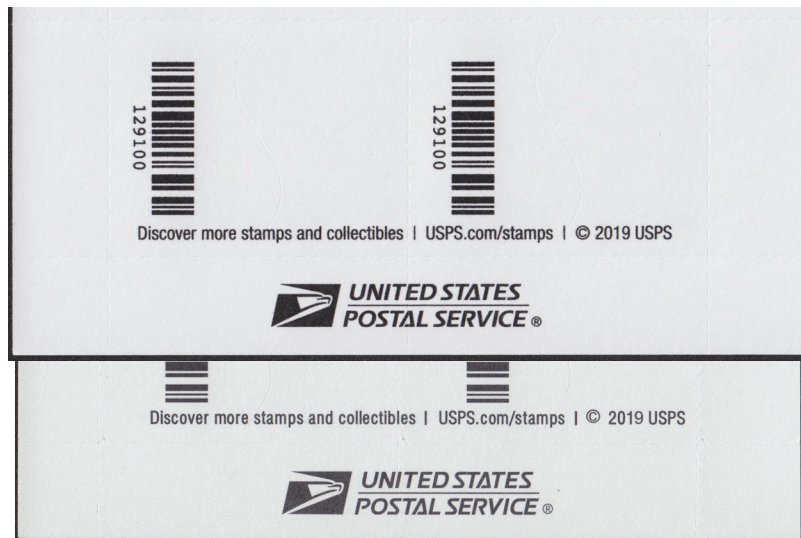
As is often the case, the microprinted “USPS” found on genuine stamps (ostensibly a security device) is a muddy mess on the counterfeits, as shown by the comparison detail photos at right). Also, because the counterfeits were created from scanning real stamps (rather than from high-resolution raw images), the multicolor rosette pattern of the printing is much coarser on the counterfeits than that found on genuine examples. This is also clearly visible in the enlarged detail images.

An examination of the die cuts reveals that the genuine stamps are almost dead-on perf 11 on a standard gauge, while the counterfeits are in between 11 and 11.1. These measurements are close enough that this is not an effective diagnostic tool.

On the reverse, the printing of genuine stamps is a bit thicker and darker than that of the counterfeits, as is apparent on the above images. The rouletting between stamps is about 11¾ on the genuine examples, but is virtually impossible to determine on the counterfeits, due to their inconsistency. This, too, is easily visible on these images. As mentioned earlier, no counterfeits have ever had phosphorescent tagging, and these high values are no different. As you can see in the photos on the following page (photographed under shortwave UV light), the genuine stamps at top are on a “dead” paper and have the familiar greenish-yellow glow of tagging, while the counterfeits are printed on a slightly fluorescent paper stock with no tagging. This is not unusual, as many counterfeits range from low fluorescence to nearly Hi-Brite paper levels. This may be unintentional.



*Enlarged detail images of genuine stamps (left top and bottom) and counterfeits (right top and bottom).*

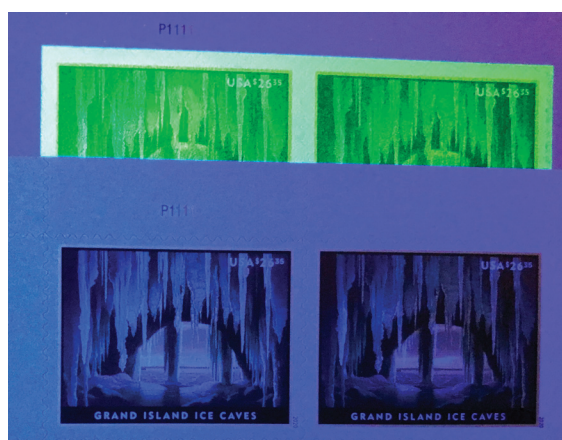


*Both the printing and back-side rouletting is visibly different between the genuine stamps (top) and the counterfeits (above).*



Both top panes are genuine, and feature the familiar greenish-yellow glow of phosphorescent tagging under shortwave ultraviolet light.

At right are the reverse side of a genuine pane (top) and a counterfeit (bottom), photographed under longwave ultraviolet light. The backing paper of genuine stamps is slightly more fluorescent than that of the counterfeits.



On the reverse, the paper difference is highly visible under either longwave or shortwave UV light. This photo was taken under longwave UV light, an inexpensive “black light,” such as that used to see “glowing” posters.

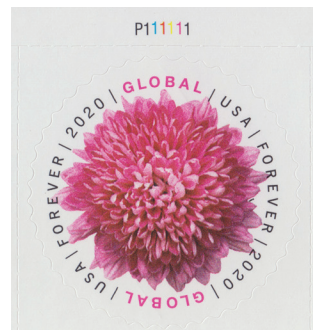
Finally, although not definitive, all counterfeits of both high values I’ve seen so far show up as the top position of the plate diagram on the reverse side of panes.

## International-Rate Forever Stamps

Like the previously described high-value issues, both international-rate Forever stamps (2018 Poinsettia and 2020 Chrysanthemum) would appear to have had the same manufacturer as each other, but not necessarily the same as other counterfeits. Examples of genuine and counterfeit singles from sheetlets of 10 are shown nearby.

Like the others, there is no phosphorescent tagging

*Genuine and counterfeit examples of the Poinsettia and Chrysanthemum international-rate Forever stamps. The genuine examples are on the left.*



(images at right), and the rosette pattern of printing is much larger and clumsier, essentially eliminating the microprinting as an identifying feature (below right). That said, both are solid reproductions that take a more intensive examination to root out than the high values (although the lack of tagging is always a dead giveaway). Either way, these stamps are well-enough produced that they could easily fool most non-collectors and postal employees.

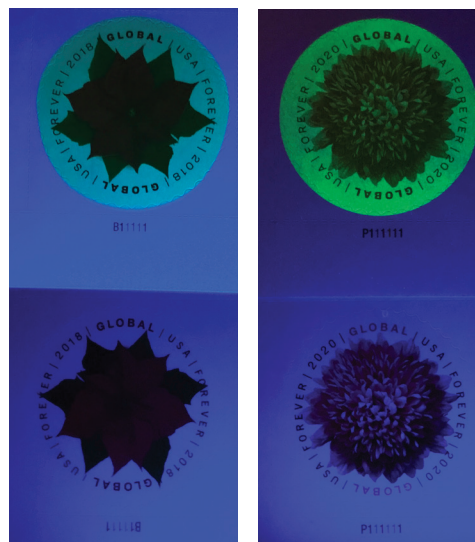
From the back (not shown), the paper of the Poinsettia counterfeits is considerably more fluorescent than that of the genuine stamps, but, ironically, the coated paper image side is more reactive on the genuine than on the counterfeit. This is not the case with the Chrysanthemum, where the paper of the fake is much brighter on the back and slightly more so on the front, despite having a slightly darker appearance under normal light.

Although not really measurable, the rouletting between stamps on the front side is visually much finer on the genuine examples than on the counterfeits, and there is virtually no die cutting on the reverse, other than the wavy-line split near the center of the back of each stamp.

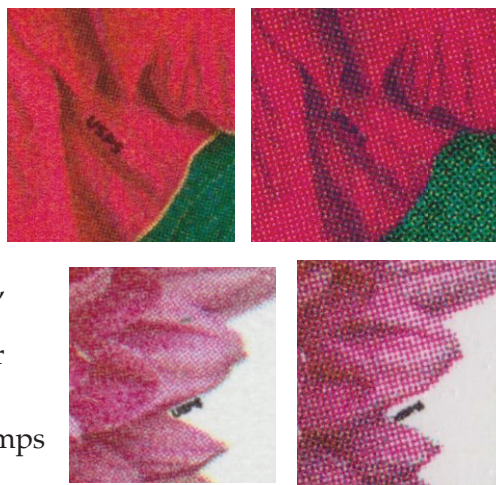
Finally, the actual die-cutting on the stamps has slightly deeper peaks and valleys on the counterfeits than on the genuine stamps.

### ... And a Rather Poor Job

Lest you think all counterfeits are alike, take a good look at the panes and



*The genuine stamps (top) have a phosphorescent coating that is absent on all counterfeits.*



*The genuine stamps (top left and above left) have far more detail than the counterfeits, and their microprinting is easy to discern under magnification.*

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enlarged images shown at right. These are the Garden Beauty domestic Forever stamps released earlier this year. Note how washed out and clumsy the counterfeit appears compared to the genuine. Also, the genuine stamps are printed on a high-gloss coated paper, whereas the counterfeits seem to be on a paper with an almost satin finish.

The die-cutting on these counterfeit stamps is closer to genuine examples than the others presented here, and the paper of the counterfeits is slightly more fluorescent than that of the genuine stamps. There is no phosphorescent tagging, of course. Under magnification, the poor quality of the counterfeits becomes amply clear.



*Genuine and counterfeit examples of the 2021 Garden Beauty Forever stamps. The genuine booklet (and inset enlargement) are on the left.*

Still, these are dangerous counterfeits, and they also illustrate just how quickly Chinese counterfeiters can replicate and ship new “product.” As I write this in October, I’m waiting to see what would appear to be new counterfeits of the Espresso Drinks stamps released in April of this year, as well as the Happy Birthday stamp just released on Sept. 9!

### ... And Finally ...

The international-rate Forever stamps (Poinsettia and Chrysanthemum) were being actively marketed at about 21% of face value, and all current counterfeits of domestic stamps are readily available in quantity for very steep discounts as well (I just saw one offer that averages 10¢ per 58¢ stamp).

If the deep discounts weren’t enough to keep you coming back for more (if you were dishonest, greedy or naïve), the coil roll of 100 stamps shown nearby (\$58 face value) was included free with my relatively small order. The stamps, a domestic-rate Forever Flag coil issue, are not even packaged like genuine stamps, which are normally enclosed in a form of sealed bubble pack. These stamps are enclosed in a reusable flip-top plastic container.

Further, if you look at the top of the container, you can see there is a QRC code, which directs you to a dedicated website where you can buy all the cheap

counterfeit stamps you wish – at very steep discounts from face value!

It's rather unfortunate that counterfeiting has reached this point. Revenue loss to the USPS aside, there's almost no challenge to collecting counterfeits anymore, other than finding postally used examples on cover, or to study the many different varieties that occur for some. It's still unknown just how many different counterfeiters there are. It's clear there are several that are very active, but there are no particular hallmarks for any that mark a particular counterfeiter.

We will no doubt continue to see an increasing number of these until or unless the USPS finds an effective way to root out the counterfeiters. In the meantime, if you receive any of these items on incoming mail, I'd love to hear about it!

As a side note, USPS has so far declined to comment officially on the rash of postal counterfeits, and there are no other government communications that deal with them. Until or unless there are arrests or prosecutions, we can only rely on the physical evidence at hand.



*This coil roll of 100 counterfeit stamps ("face" value of \$58) was included as a free bonus with a fairly small order. Note the "non-standard" packaging in a plastic flip-top container with a QRC code directing you to the company's website.*

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# Collectors Club Library Notes

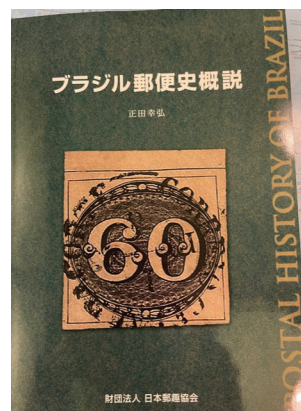
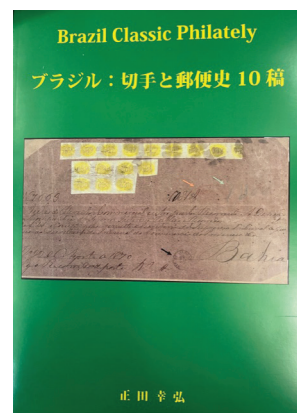
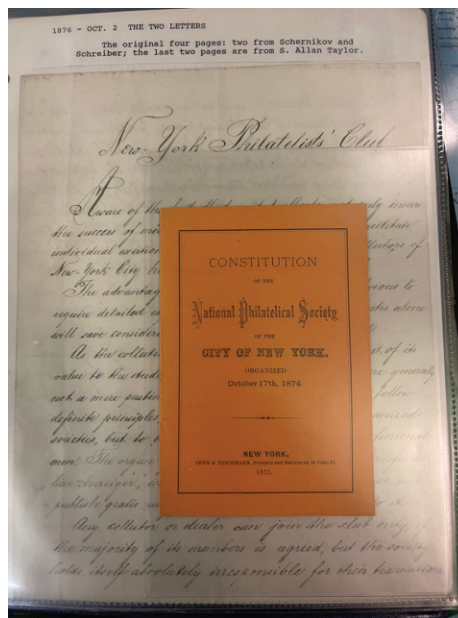
by Robert Gray

The library was quite fortunate to have several important documents donated recently. Our thanks go to Vincent King, who has donated two letters dated 1876 from the New York Philatelist Club and the 1874 constitution of the National Philatelic Society of the City of New York. These philatelic historical documents will be special library treasures.

Collectors Club member Yukihiko Shoda donated *Brazil Classic Philately* and the *Postal History of Brazil*. We also received two volumes on Thurn und Taxis from the Philatelie Christoph Gaertner. These books, in German, are by Jurgen Naab: *Frankfurten 1852-1867 Briefpost, Postvereinsausland, Thurn und Taxis* and *Frankfurten 1852-1867 Briefpost, Postverein, Hansestadte, Hohenzollern, Thurn und Taxis*. Investphila SA donated a book by its founder, Guido Craveri: *Census of the 1857 10-Kopeck Imperforate Stamp of Russia* (please see review elsewhere in this issue). These books are all very welcomed additions to our library.

The Collectors Club library currently occupies portions of our Clubhouse on three different floors. In the basement is an extensive collection of philatelic journals, U.S. post office reports and a series of UPU reports. Many members are familiar with the Reading Room on the first floor, which holds the bulk of our philatelic books and catalogs. On the third floor there is one room holding rare books and another room holding our auction catalog collection. The potential relocation of the library is not without its challenges. We estimate that there are about 20 tons of books and journals. The potential relocation, however, offers the opportunity to put all our philatelic literature collections in one room with shelf space for new acquisitions, better organization and working space for researchers.

The library committee is working to identify the major issues involved in a future move, including the selection of new shelving and determining how best to reorganize the collections. If you would like to help, the library can use volunteers during the normal working hours. Contact Andrea Matura, club librarian, at [andreamatura@gmail.com](mailto:andreamatura@gmail.com).



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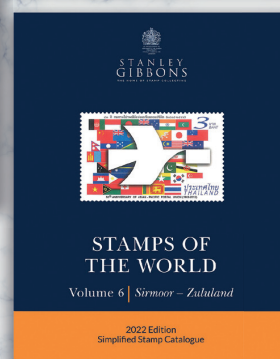
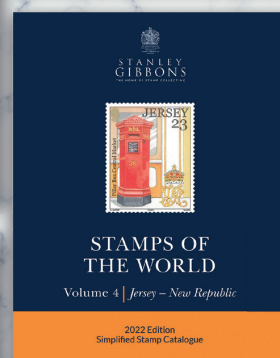
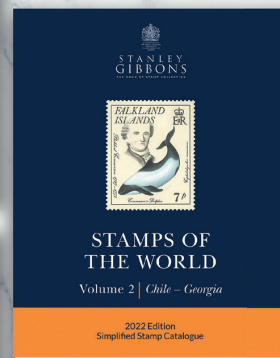
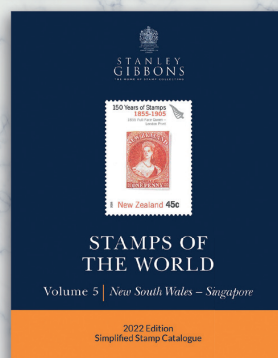
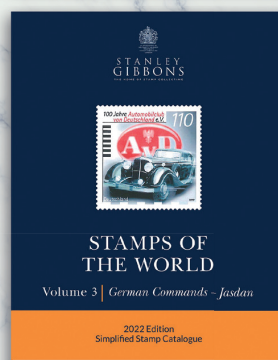
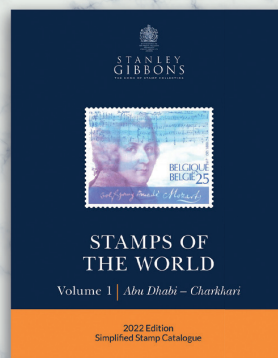
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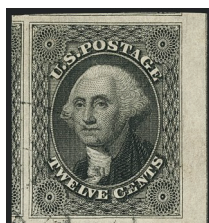
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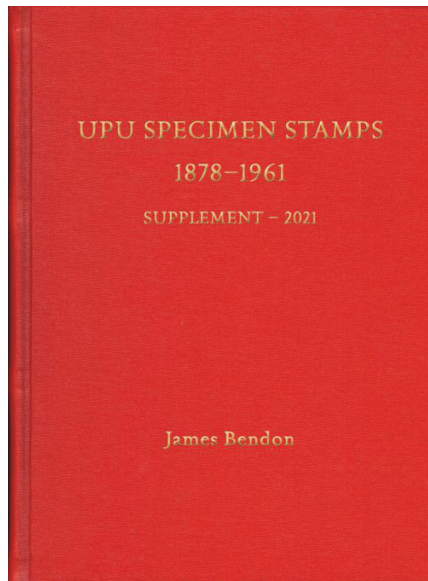
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# Book Reviews

**UPU SPECIMEN STAMPS, 1878-1961 – SUPPLEMENT 2021** by James Bendon, published by Oxford Book Projects, 8¾ by 11¼ inches (216 by 280mm), hardbound, 142 pages, price £40 plus p&p and can be ordered from the publisher's website at [www.jamesbendon.com](http://www.jamesbendon.com) in the United Kingdom, ISBN 978 1 870696 06 7

James Bendon has made a lifetime study of the specimen stamps of the world. He first published a book on the subject in 1988. Over time, James became the clearing house of information on all new discoveries of specimen stamps and postal stationery, as well as questions pertaining to all aspects of the specimens' characteristics. His unchallenged role as the doyen of specimens was well-earned from his diligent studies, especially those at the archives of the Universal Postal Union in Berne, Switzerland. Philatelists who collect UPU-related material have a high regard for James Bendon and his contributory work in the UPU aspect of specimens.

Here Bendon is at it again ... also proving that philatelic fields of study are almost endless. So many new finds of specimens have come to the surface that James found justification to publish a supplement, with even more information. There is enough additional information in this supplement that James gives a table on page xxvi which cross-references the new information in the pages of the supplement to the pages in the original book (published in 2015) where they are related.



As with the previous book, this one is scholarly and is handy to use. Anyone who collects a country that has issued specimen stamps needs to have a copy of this book on their shelf for ready access. But even for those countries that supplied non-defaced stamps to the UPU, collectors can obtain “specimens” for their collections because of the application of distinctive receiving marks on those stamps upon arrival in some identifiable UPU-member reference collections.

For philatelic judges, both the original book and this supplement are de rigor. When I am judging, I find many specialists (of certain issues and certain countries in the late 1800s and early 1900s) are unaware that the specimen stamps in their collections are not actually “UPU” specimens, but commercial ones. Not all countries overprinted their stamps before sending them to the UPU.

What many collectors will find interesting is that the creation of defaced stamps as specimens predates the UPU, when post offices wished to put examples on announcements for new stamp issues as well as when the various printers of stamps wished to show other postal administrations the quality of their work.

Many collectors will also find interesting the different means by which post offices (and printers) would deface specimens for their various purposes of distribution and even sale. There are quite a number of stamps and postal stationery items that appear to be “canceled-to-order” (CTO), but were actually specimens sent to the UPU in Berne for distribution to other members of that organization.

Another aspect that enthralled me was the number of stamps that were printed but never issued, or stamps that were quickly withdrawn, but which are available to collectors as specimens, in a number of cases. Who would have thought? There are also the cases of stamps having to be reprinted for UPU distribution (because when they were created someone forgot to send a shipment to Berne from the original printing) and which are different from the actual issues in nuanced ways (very often paper differences, but also inks and perforations).

This book is not just a compendium of the various stamps with some form of specimen marking, but is full of stories of interest that bring some animated flavor to reading such a book. In that way, it is not just your typical reference book. Even though James and I have been collecting the field of the UPU individually, in parallel, for almost 50 years each, I found the book enthralling.

Because of James’ passionate dedication to the details of specimen stamps and postal stationery, this book is his Magnum Opus, and his continuing gift to philately.

— James P. Gough

**Census of the 1857 10 Kopeck Imperforate stamp of Russia, By Guido Craveri 2021, published by Autopubblicato, 403 pages, leatherbound, listed price €180, available from David Feldman ([www.davidfeldman.com](http://www.davidfeldman.com)), Amazon and other dealers, ISBN 9791220086080**

The author, Guido Craveri, is the founder of Investphila SA of Lugano, Switzerland. He served as Chairman of the Council of Philatelists of the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum and was named Chairman Emeritus in 2004. In 2006 he was awarded the Smithsonian Philatelic Achievement Award in recognition of his many contributions to philately. Craveri, with the publication of this book, has once again contributed to philately.

The 1857 10 Kopeck Imperforate was the first postage stamp of the Russian Empire. About 5,000 examples of the stamp are known, either on or off cover. The author accepted the challenge to find and take a census of this stamp on cover including known multiples of canceled stamps. A total of 458 covers were recorded in the census, with only 14 of unknown origin. Using current geography, the covers were canceled in Russia (110), Latvia (93), Ukraine (86), Lithuania (83), Estonia (52), Belorussia (12), Poland (7) and Azerbaijan (1). All these countries were either part of – or controlled by – the Russian Empire at that time.



The covers are all illustrated and organized in alphabetical order of the city in which it was posted. The provenance is recorded directly below the cover's illustration. Following this are illustrations of 14 covers whose city of origin cannot be identified.

Used pairs of the imperforate 1857 10 Kopeck are rare. The book has a separate section containing 56 examples with a note on their provenance. Six strips of three are also illustrated, as well as one block of four and one strip of five. Large blocks of this stamp are not known because registered mail, insured mail and international mail had to be paid in cash, rather than with stamps. The census also describes mixed franking on cover, including one with both the perforate and imperforate types.

The author divided the cancellations found into three broad categories: pen canceled only (70 covers); pre-adhesive handstamp or locally made 1858 cancellation (270 covers, including some with pen cancellations, as well); and various styles of dotted cancellations (115 covers). Three of the 458 covers were apparently not included in this survey. The pre-adhesive and locally made handstamps are described in a table arranged by town with comments on rarity.

The index and bibliography complete this book as a compelling reference for anyone collecting in this area. It also provides an excellent example of how to arrange a philatelic census.

— Robert Gray

**1851-1862 La Storia Postale della Toscana — The Postal History of Tuscany, by Mario Mentaschi and Vittorio Morani; Milan 2021, Post Horn Publishing, in Italian and English, hardbound, dust jacket, 444 pages (A4 size) illustrated throughout in color (including maps), ISBN 978-88-945287-2-5; preface in Italian, English and French; table of contents; Index of currencies, Index of contract packets, Index of conventions, Index of postal markings, postal rates (to Italian destinations, Europe and Rest of the World), list of abbreviations, bibliography. Cost is €100 + shipping (Italy €7; Europe €30; Africa, Asia, Americas €40; Oceania incl. Australia €50) - for orders contact: board@posthornmagazine.com; additionally claudio.manzati@lean-instituteitalia.com (this address can be used to send PayPal payments, which require an extra 5% for PayPal fees - wire transfer is also possible). Also available from Vaccari (info@vaccari.it)**

Once upon a time, postal history was regarded as an eccentric branch of philately, even though philately is, of course, a branch of postal history. Then, unexpectedly, postal history rescued the philatelic market at a critical juncture. Nowadays, every cover is examined using postal history parameters: franking, rate, route, destination, postmarks and accessory marks. Even those collecting modern stamp issues have adopted the postal history approach, which allows them to widen the scope of their collections and broaden their horizons. Rare covers of the 1800s franked with stamps with minor flaws were regarded as "below par"; as postal history scholars and collectors had a closer look, in due course, availability of such items decreased, while prices increased. One remembers a time when collectors never looked at the back of a cover or envelope; the focus was on the address side, and the quality of the stamps and postmarks. Most astonishingly, the content was often overlooked. "What a difference postal history makes!"

This new book on the postal history of the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany is indispensable due to the teaming up of two outstanding scholars, both extremely knowledgeable, experienced and conversant with all facets of their specialties. Mario Mentaschi is well known for two acclaimed books that have won top awards in Italy and internationally on the postal history of Italian States. The same can be said of their jaw-dropping collections: Vittorio Morani has formed a magnificent collection on the postal history of Tuscany, which has regularly won large gold medals at international exhibitions, as well as an International Grand Prix.

Morani's collection deals with the postal history of the Grand-Duchy from April 1, 1851, when the first stamps featuring the Marzocco were issued, to Dec. 31, 1862. On Jan. 1, 1863, a new postal law of the Kingdom of Italy came into force to harmonize the postal service in the territories and states annexed as a result of the Second War of Italian Independence and Garibaldi's liberation of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

By the mid-1840s, a rail network that would connect all important cities and even remote areas became a reality; these developments impacted the movement of people and goods and impacted positively on the delivery of mail. Specific handstamps were used on mail delivered by trains; for example, an oval "S^F^" (Strada Ferrata; Rail Road), a circle date-stamp inscribed "FIRENZE STRADA FERRATA" and similar ones for Leghorn, Lucca and Pisa. Procaccini (countryside postmen), estafettes, mail coaches and private postal entrepreneurs ensured that the postal service would connect every hamlet and small town to the rest of the state and beyond. No fewer than 30 mail-coach companies used their handstamps to mark the mail they handled and, for this very reason, they rank high in the collectors' esteem.

Until December 1862, the post office of Tuscany did not impose a monopoly on the postal service; as a result, there were private postal operators. As railways became operational, the postal administration of the Grand-Duchy signed an agreement with the privately owned railways, including the "Leopolda," the "Strada Ferrata Centrale Toscana" and other companies, including the "Strade Ferrate Lucchesi," and the "Livornesi" and "Maria Antonia."

The postal rapports with neighboring states may lead the reader to believe that mail exchange was an easy task; in some instances, the prepayment of postage at the point of origin was mandatory. In late 1849 to early 1850, as Vienna gradually recovered from the shocking developments in Italy. Austria flexed its postal muscles and launched an Austro-German Postal League, which



included the whole empire, as well as Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Schleswig-Holstein. By Spring 1850, the southern counterpart, the Austro-Italian Postal League, was offered to rather unenthusiastic Italian States. The postal strategy was underpinning a more ambitious, truly imperialistic plan to unify economically and politically north and south under Austrian leadership.

To activate the postal alliance, the participating states had to introduce the use of adhesive postage stamps, among other things. The prepayment of postage by using postage stamps was mandatory for mail to addressees in states belonging to the Union. Letters mailed without, or with insufficient stamps, resulted in the addressee having to pay full postage or the missing amount to cover the postage due, as well as a proportional surcharge. Tuscany was to keep the proceeds from the sale of the stamps, as well as the earnings derived from delivery of non-prepaid mail, addressed to places within the Grand Duchy. In exchange, the incoming franked mail from member states to destinations within Tuscany was to be delivered free of charge; additionally, Tuscany was expected to expeditiously convey transit mail to other member states of the Union at no cost.

Concurrently with the release of its stamps on April 1, 1851, Tuscany had become a member state of the Austro-Italian Postal League, which included Austria, Modena, Parma, Tuscany and the reluctant Papal States. Vienna's wily move was aimed at substantially reducing mail from Italian States transiting through the Sardinian Kingdom and, by extension, France. Even at this early stage we see that the Second War of Italian Independence was being rehearsed as a postal war.



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1929.NOV.4 First Day of Issue of Air Mail Stamps Flown Registered Cover  
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This aggressive, monopolistic, micro-managerial, pre-packaged model replaced the old bi-lateral postal conventions. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies did not join the League, as it felt railroaded in exchange for no tangible advantage. To make things worse, Vienna had an authoritarian stance in all negotiations. Nevertheless, the cogent points were the uniformity of postal rates and the discontinuation of transit tariffs. The real aim, however, was to torpedo the competition from France and the Kingdom of Sardinia, while benefiting the coffers of the Austrian treasury.

This book shares all the research carried out by the co-authors in the most comprehensive manner ever devised regarding the stamps and postal history of any Italian state before and during the unification process — which includes mail exchanges to and from former states under the 1859-60 provisional governments. What was greatly admired at international stamp events is now shared in this book with the added advantage that every detail that could not cram the display pages is made available here, thereby shedding more light on the various postal aspects — thus augmenting the knowledge of the readers.

Moreover, your covers and letters are not just conversation pieces, they tell the story and details regarding the mode of delivery, the transit points, the costs involved and, in many instances, the date of delivery at destination. The evolutions of postal rates and routings are presented chronologically; amazingly enough, the routes and rates of foreign mail bound for Tuscany are also examined. To make the readers' research easier, no less than four analytic indexes enrich this volume; they help a lot when it comes to currencies, ships contracted to convey mail, postal agreements and conventions with foreign postal administrations and postal markings.

Part One deals with postal tariffs, including those for mail conveyed by Tuscany railways; Part Two examines mail exchanged with other Italian States; Part Three focuses on mail exchanged with foreign countries overland and by sea, including distant places such as St. Thomas (Danish West Indies), Mauritius, Ascension, Nova Scotia, the United States and Indonesia — to name a few.

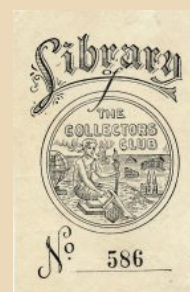
The production is truly lavish, the first-class mastery in postal history shared by this book is impressive, the covers are mesmerizing and the illustrations of old paintings are cherries on a big cake. If you do not want to have regrets later, buy this book now.

— *Reviewed by Giorgio Migliavacca*

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*Tibet Stamps and Postal History, edited by Steve Chazen and Danny Wong, 444 gilt-edged pages, 9 by 12 inches, case-bound, dust jacket, in English and Chinese, Royal Philatelic Society London, London, U.K., 2019, ISBN 978-0-900631-98-6, £55 plus postage from Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY, United Kingdom, or [www.rpsl.org.uk/home.asp](http://www.rpsl.org.uk/home.asp).*

This treatise now becomes the “bible” of Tibetan philately. This is not to say that previous works by Arnold C. Waterfall, Fortune Wang and others do not continue to serve as useful resources in some details. However, this latest entry in the philatelic literature is more comprehensive and corrects a number of errors recorded by these and other earlier sources. Some examples are the actual release dates of the First and Second issues of Tibet, now documented with earliest-known uses.

Most collectors of Tibet concentrate on the area known as the Tibet Autonomous Region. However, this book includes the broad scope of the Tibetan highlands and several autonomous counties and prefectures. Early chapters of the book focus on the historic and geographical entities that comprise Tibet, and discuss the Imperial Courier Service (yizhan or I-chang). The latter was essentially replaced with the introduction of the Chinese Imperial Post in 1910.

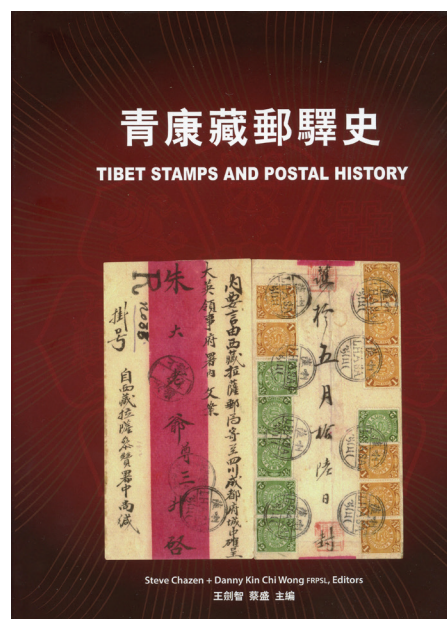
Subsequent chapters deal with relevant Nepali military and civilian mail in Tibet, the British fieldpost offices (includes the Younghusband expedition), the British Indian post offices in Tibet, Indian censorship of Tibetan mail during WWII and the Everest mountaineering expedition of 1924. Several chapters are devoted to the introduction of the Chinese Imperial Post in Tibet (including use of the non-overprinted and then overprinted stamps), and related areas like Kham and Amdo.

The Tibet local post stamp issues are described in several chapters, followed by the local post rates and markings. These chapters are of interest to Tibet stamp collectors as they detail the First, Second and Third issues, as well as subsequent stamps used for telegraphic and official purposes. The rate information is useful since native postmarks often did not include a date. Tibet local post stamps continued to be used after Communist takeover but the Tibetan post offices were disbanded in 1959.

The final chapters are devoted to military and confidential posts and then the People's Post in the various Tibetan areas. Appendices document areas related to Tibet, such as Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh and the nearby office at Leh in India. An extensive bibliography and an index conclude the treatise.

The bulk of the text was authored by Danny Wong, along with significant contributions from Steve Chazen, Leo Martyn, Jeremy Brewer, Anthony Bard and Yang Kun. For the collector of Tibet, this volume should take an honored space on the bookshelf.

— Alan Warren



*Pacchi Postali 1881-1914 (Parcel Post 1881-1914), by Emanuele M. Gabbini, Rimini 2017, hard-bound, in Italian, 206 pages 8½ by 12 inches, color illustrations throughout, bibliographic references include extensive listing (52 pages) of regulations gleaned from the Post Office Bulletins, tariffs, bibliography and index, €40 plus postage and handling, available from AICPM (info@aicpm.net).*

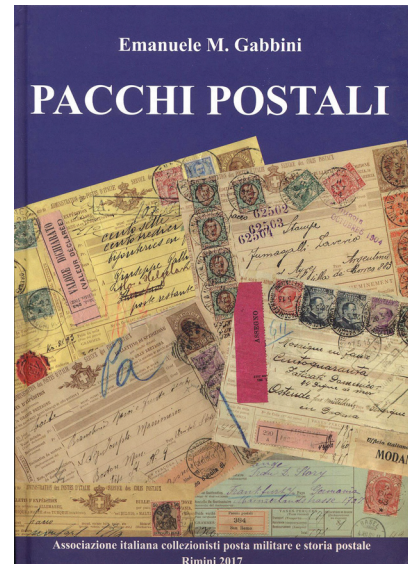
The author of this book is well known for selecting unexplored and challenging areas of philately and postal history, both as a collector and a postal historian, with seven other important monographs to his credit. In his preface, Piero Macrelli, president of the AICPM and Italian Federation of Philatelic Societies, says that the author has left no stone unturned and that his research on the first 35 years of the parcel post service started with retrieving all the pertinent regulations, circulars and legislation, as well as archival documentation amounting to some 10,000 “fragile” pages – fragile because of chemicals used to manufacture the paper at the turn of the century. It certainly was a labor of love and, after three years of hard work, the subject matter was in focus and impressively presented.

The story started in 1880 when the Universal Postal Union (UPU), well aware of the demand for an international parcel post service, invited all 21 member countries to sign a postal convention in Paris for an international service; this was achieved and, initially, the parcels’ maximum weight was 3 kilograms; this limit was gradually increased.

The Italian Post with its 3,500 post offices, took control of the service, and by the end of 1881 some Italian cities began to benefit from home delivery of parcels. By 1883, even the rural post offices could send and receive parcels and perform home deliveries. Special stamps for parcels were issued in 1884; these were supplemented in 1886 by two additional denominations. In 1888, special parcel post dispatch cards were adopted to simplify the postal processing; definitive stamps were also used on dispatch cards to complete the required franking. The format of the dispatch was changed a few times to respond to the need for clarity and simplicity.

In 1882 the Royal Post introduced traveling post offices for its parcel service; the success of this initiative took the postal administration totally by surprise. Advertising and the greater availability of consumer goods had led to a remarkable rise of activity in the marketplace, which found in the parcels service a great ally. The low tariffs were advantageous to publishers and bookshops, companies importing goods from abroad and traders in textiles, clothes and medicines. The figures for the numbers of parcels sent are impressive: 415,366 in 1881 and 8,170,988 in 1899-1900.

In 1914, another innovation was introduced, a new type of parcel post card was issued; it differed from the earlier ones in many ways. The new type did not feature a stamp anymore but its face value was shown underneath the Savoy coat of arms; if additional postage was required, the card was devised to accommodate them. This time, however, they were not definitive stamps but specific parcel



post stamps, consisting of a se-tenant pair, divided by perforations. Both sections featured the same face value: the left handside section was inscribed at the bottom "SUL BOLLETTINO" (on the waybill, the larger section of the dispatch section); the right-hand side section was inscribed "SULLA RICEVUTA" (on the customer's receipt section which was torn off and handed to the sender).

The book stops before 1914 because the parcel post service had gone from the first decade, which can be labeled as pioneering era to the ensuing 25 years, which witnessed increasing demand and new postal adjustments that became inescapable because of the international service and its complexities. As we get into the Great War years (World War I), the service enters its modern era. Just keep in mind that during the first 35 years explored by this book some 275 million parcels were sent, 26 million of them to foreign destinations, amounting to a spectacular 1 million tons of goods sent by mail (1 ton = 2,240 pounds, U.K., 2,000 pounds U.S.).

Gabbini explores all the aspects in great detail, beginning with a global birds-eye view, including Italy, Great Britain and all major countries. It then delves into the international demand for an international parcellpost, the pivotal role of UPU and its 1885 Lisbon congress, where member countries had substantially increased, the maximum weight was increased to 5 kilograms and a number of amendments and addenda to the 1880 convention were approved.

The major regulations of the parcel post service, with special focus on the aspects that impacted the consumers, are discussed, including size, franking, destination, conveyance, Libya, Eritrea, Somalia and Italian post offices abroad, prohibitions, restrictive terms and fines, packaging, sealing, addresses, content description and values, C.O.D. service, customs duty aspects, insurance, parcel-post stationery, delivery of incoming parcels, rural post offices service, customs handling, parcel-post exchange bureau and more.

Chapter 3 deals with domestic parcel post service and its tariffs; Chapter 4 examines the service to and from Italian colonies and Italian post offices abroad; Chapter 5 gives important information on the complex aspects of parcels sent to foreign countries, such as Angola, Dutch Antilles, Australia, the Guyanas, West Indies, United States, Zanzibar and many more; means of conveyance quite often involving ships and steamers of various nationalities.

Chapter 6 zooms in on statistics; sound boring? Not quite. Just think about these random examples: In 1882 the Italian post office at Tripoli sent 21 parcels to Italy, three to other countries; in 1899 Italy sent one parcel to Bolivia, 12 to Danish colonies and 7 to Guatemala.

Philatelic considerations are discussed in Chapter 8, where we learn about the use of parcel post stamps used during King Umberto's years, which surprises us for their scarcity on certain parcel-post dispatch cards.

Where there is demand forgers and manipulators get busy and the author warns about purchases on mega-internet platforms; nevertheless, he concludes that parcel post stationery is still a mostly safe collecting area. Indeed, there are different approaches collectors may have, and Gabbini gives quite a few examples. Additionally, he delves into commercial value of used stationery.

If you are looking for a new, intriguing, exciting and rewarding collecting field, this book is for you; it will pay for itself after you make one or two lucky

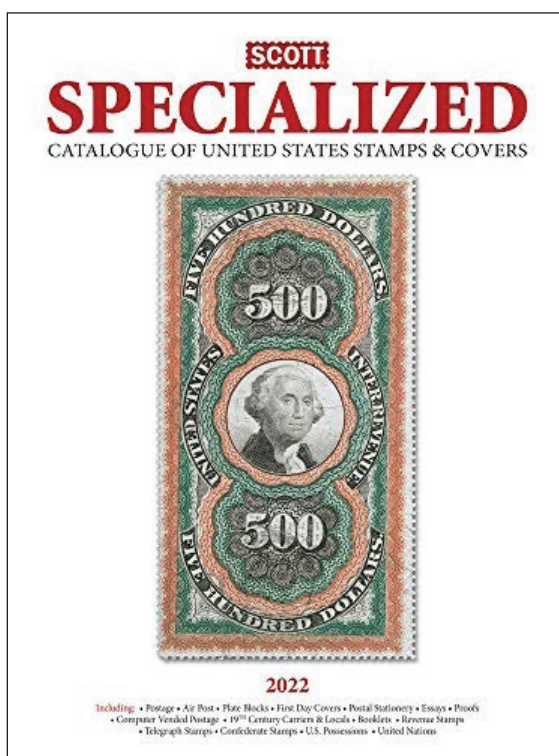
finds. When you are asked for serious money, make sure the seller has a good reputation and will not object to your submission of the item to specialized Italian experts before you conclude the transaction. If the answer is no, turn the page.

The information found in this book may appeal only to specialized collectors, but until now this was an unexplored aspect of postal history and, as such, it has great potential. The language is not a barrier, especially when valuable finds can be made.

— Giorgio Migliavacca

*2022 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers, 1,346 pages plus 61 pages of introduction, index and other useful information, thousands of color illustrations, 8½ by 11 inches, perfect bound, Amos Media, Sidney, Ohio. List price \$139.99, available at a discount through Amos Advantage program or from numerous stamp dealers.*

Without a doubt, the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* is one of the single-most important regularly produced reference sources for those who collect United States material. Every year now brings expansions, enhancements and enrichments that make the catalog even more important. That tradition continues this year with the release of the 100th edition. But it hasn't always been that way. Many of us collectors who have been around a few decades remember a time when the *Specialized* was nearly irrelevant. A brief recounting of the catalog's history seems appropriate with this centennial edition. My intense interest in the *Specialized* is not only because I'm a long-time specialist of United States stamps and postal history, but also because I have a long history with both Scott and the catalog, and the past 25 years or so have been an exciting time to watch the catalog grow and develop into a truly indispensable resource for the collector of U.S. stamps.



Before Scott was purchased by Amos Press (now Amos Media) in 1984, the *Specialized* – in particular – had become anything but. During its early years, under the editorial eye of Hugh Clark, the *Specialized* was a wonder of its time, diving deep into U.S. philately for those who wanted to do more than simply fill a space in an album.

By the 1960s and '70s, however, the *U.S. Specialized* had devolved into little more than a simple new-issue listing, with some of the older detailed listings remaining intact. Specialists were extremely frustrated, and major and significant varieties of the 1938 Presidential series, the 1954 Liberty series, the 1960s Prominent Americans and the 1970s Americana series and more were all but ignored

by Scott. Specialists had to rely on small networks of correspondence between devoted collectors and the Bureau Issues Association (now the United States Stamp Society) for the information they needed.

Even as a young reporter at *Linn's Stamp News*, new front-page news story varieties I either discovered or wrote about did not materialize into listings, and sometimes heated arguments with Scott editors resulted only in more stonewalling. The most notable of these was when I discovered the two different color types of the 25¢ Pheasant booklet (now Scott 2283 and 2283b), shown nearby. As you can see, the difference is stark. An interview with Don McDowell, who was then in charge of the USPS Stamp Division (production) revealed he was unsatisfied with the bluish-violet shade of the sky and told the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to "back off a little" on the sky. The BEP did this by configuring new gravure printing cylinders. The original cylinder (shown) contained both red and blue color sells. The new cylinder had all red removed, creating a major color type visible on mint or used singles (one of the determiners for a variety listing). Despite this incontrovertible evidence, I was told "it's just a shade."



At the time (November 1988), both types were plentiful in post offices throughout the country. But because the light-sky version wasn't listed by Scott until several years later, collectors didn't purchase the new type and supplies dried up. Although the stamp is common used, the light blue sky version now catalogs \$4.50 per mint stamp, \$45 for a pane of 10 and \$90 for a complete booklet.

Then things began to change – slowly at first – but gathering speed. After several years under the ownership of a company that actually cared about stamps and collectors, Scott began to respond to feedback and begin to improve sadly lacking listings.

Then, under the stewardship of Jim Kloetzel, who was recruited in the early 1990s, more wrongs of the past were righted and Scott began looking for ways to improve and expand the catalog. Kloetzel is a thoughtful specialist and a still-very-active editor emeritus. Long-ignored major varieties were studied, verified and listed (including the Pheasant); major varieties of new stamps were listed almost immediately upon discovery and verification; and modern postal history values eventually began to show up in listings, including significant and detailed on-cover values for stamps of the Prexie, Liberty and Prominent Americans series. Entirely new sections, such as dummy and test material, postal counterfeits and others, were added and revenues and other sections were greatly expanded and improved.

All this is a bit of a digression to state exactly why the release of the new *U.S. Specialized* each year is such an anticipated event by many collectors.

Before getting into more detail about what has been added or changed this year, the casual observer will note – perhaps with a bit of shock – that the "Identifier" and yellow-tabbed graded valuing section have both been removed from the *Specialized*, yet the 2022 edition (at 1,346 pages) is still about the same size as the 2021 edition (1,370 pages). This partially explains the reason for their absence.

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### 54<sup>th</sup> AUCTION

**11 OCTOBER 2022**

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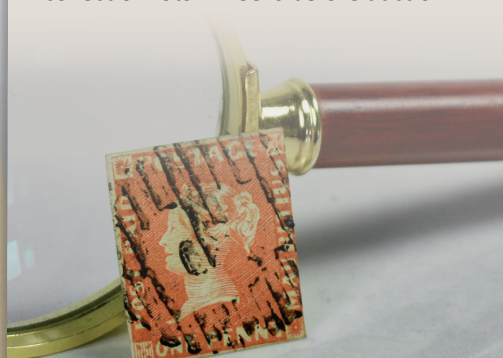
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# C.G.

Although Scott has commented little on this major change (other than to note that it occurred), there are several obvious reasons.

First and foremost, as sections continue to be added or enhanced, the catalog continues to grow. Eventually (and in the not-too-distant future), the catalog will likely outgrow its single-volume capacity. Removing these sections now will have minimal effect on the rest of the catalog.

Secondly, of course, removing these sections provides Scott with another stream of revenue. Both products will now be sold separately. I have mixed feelings about both.

Although I do not yet have information about the value supplement, I can tell you about the First Edition of the *Scott Identifier of Definitive Stamp Issues*, which is published in an easy-to-handle 6- by 9-inch format (76 pages) and will retail for \$14.99 or so (depending upon from whom you purchase it).

While it may be a bit frustrating for some to have to purchase yet another separate product in addition to an expensive catalog, the best part about the identifier section is that it really doesn't need to be purchased annually. Aside from new issues, very little in this section changes from year to year; diagnostics and characteristics remain the same for virtually all classic and definitive

stamps. Handling the new volume will also be much easier than constantly flipping back and forth between the identifier and the actual listings. Still, it was always handy to have it present.

As for the graded valuing section, while it was a separate product before being folded into the *Specialized* a few years ago, it remains an extremely helpful resource for figuring the actual values of stamps in different grades. (The current valuing standard for all stamp listings in the *Specialized* is in the grade of very fine, or a grade of 80~). The majority of mint and used stamps are not encountered in this high of grade, so many collectors have a tendency to over-value their stamps, based on the standard listings. As long as the supplement remains current and affordable, it should continue to be a useful resource.



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Now, let's get down to the catalog itself, as well as some of the trends it represents.

While many of us still struggle with mountains of discount postage that will never diminish appreciably in our lifetimes, I find it ironic that this does not hold true for much postage issued since about the year 2000. Values for many of these stamps have either remained stable or have increased slightly. For example, values for extremely popular issues, such as the 1998 Christmas Wreaths (Scott 3245-3252),

2000 Berries coil (Scott 3404-3407), the 2012 Aloha Shirts (Scott 4592-4601, sheet and coil) and the 2013 Vintage Seed Pack stamps (Scott 4754-4763), among others, left the entire concept of "discount postage" in the dust long ago. Not only are they hard to find, but when found, you'll likely pay close to full cata-



log value for them – values that are already much higher than similar stamps (from five to eight times face value in some cases).

Similarly, a number of Forever stamps are performing well, too. In part this is because they will always be valid for the current first-class rate, and their available numbers (at least mint) will continue to shrink as they are used. A great example of this is the 2019 Cactus Flowers issue (Scott 5350-5359), which now has a catalog value of \$2.50 per mint single, (58¢) or \$50 for a booklet of 20!

More importantly, however, is the fact that much smaller quantities of most new issues are saved by either collectors or dealers (because of the discount postage problem). As a result, any pressure on a



much more limited supply increases the relative value of these stamps. While I noted very few advances in values of this era of stamps this year, I also noted absolutely no reductions. I suspect we'll see several leaps in next year's *Specialized*.

Two of the largest improvements noticed in this year's edition include new, larger and higher-quality images for hundreds of stamps throughout, which is part of an ongoing project. This also includes the addition of enlarged images of several plate varieties that have not previously been illustrated, such as several in the 1932 Washington Bicentennial issue. These listings are helpful for promoting this specialist area because many collectors don't seek plate varieties, since they don't know what they're looking for. Images with listings invariably spur demand.



The other welcome addition, based on the apparent growing popularity of collecting complete panes of stamps, is the inclusion of values for full panes for many of the commemorative issues from the late 1970s on. Previously, this was a valuing area that was tackled only by Brookman in its annual volume. Surprisingly, there are some panes (even in the discount postage era) that command premiums as collectibles themselves.

Another area that jumped out at me is an enhanced Essays section, that includes a number of modern stamp essays from the 1970s-'90s that have recently come onto the market.

Since the early 1990s, each year's *Specialized* includes several features of lasting research value for the areas they cover. The 2022 edition is no different.

The first of these, by Dan Undersander, appears within the stamped envelope (postal stationery) section of the catalog.

For many years, stamped envelopes were produced by the U.S. Stamped Envelope Agency in Pennsylvania, with few varieties of note during that time. In the past decade or so, the printing contract for stamped envelopes has been done by Ashton-Potter. Several recent envelopes, including the 2013 Bank Swallow; Eagle, Shield and Flags; 2017 Barn Swallow; and 2020 Flag and Stars, have been found with blurry microprinting – a symptom of a poorer-quality secondary printing. These seem to be scarcer than the higher-quality printings, and have received minor-letter listing status. Others may appear as well.

The second feature is an in-depth analysis of the large Narcotic Tax Stamps of 1919-70, and the design differences that occurred between different printings of this long-running series of revenue stamps. The feature, by specialist Gregg Greenwald, sports enlarged, enhanced images of these design differences, making identification of them much easier. This is rather important, since there are some significant value differences!

The marked retail price of the 2022 *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* is \$139.99, but it is frequently offered for less through the Amos Media website or from your favorite supply dealer.

— Wayne L. Youngblood

# The Collectors Club

**Membership Update: Aug. 15 through Oct. 26, 2021. We are pleased to welcome the following new members.**

Approved by the Board of Governors:

**Aug. 31, 2021**

## Non-Resident

Barasch, Alan  
Brahm, Jeffrey  
Claussen, Dr. Dane S.  
Cortese, Michael  
Cumming, George  
Farrell, Patrick (Mike)  
Ghadiri, Khisrow  
Guthrie, Scott  
Johnson, Stephen  
Jones, Michael  
King, Arthur (Vince)  
Lingler, Sandra  
McCallum, Peter John  
Pearlman, Meade  
Redner, Dr. Gregg  
Reiber, Daryl  
Ripley, David  
Serdy, Michael  
Vernon, Lynn  
Wieting, Amy

Creve Coeur, Mo.  
Doylestown, Pa.  
Moscow, Idaho  
Concord, N.H.  
Marlborough, Mass.  
St. Paul, Ind.  
San Jose, Calif.  
Hunts Point, W.V.  
Oakland, Calif.  
Pittsburg, Calif.  
Georgetown, Texas  
Elyria, Ohio  
Woodburn, Ore.  
Canton, Ohio  
Dorchester, Ontario, Canada  
Sacramento, Calif.  
Highland, Md.  
Half Moon Bay, Calif.  
Plymouth, Ind.  
Bowling Green, Ken.

## Overseas

Benford, Colin

Truro, Cornwall, United Kingdom

**Sept. 29, 2021**

## Non-Resident

Lee, Jeff Alan  
Ring, Jackson A.  
Schlatter, Willy Herbert Karl

Saratoga Springs, N.Y.  
Kansas City Mo.  
Barrie, Ontario Canada

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Oct. 26, 2021

## Non-Resident

Greenberg, Neil  
Rogers, Melanie  
Prabhu, Vedantha V.

Marietta, Ga.  
Chicago, Ill.  
Shimoga, India

Congratulations to our new members. A membership certificate will be forwarded to the address on file for each. Please do keep us updated as to current address and email so that we can continue to serve you. Electronic outreach is increasingly important as we continue to expand our offerings. Our website ([www.collectorsclub.org](http://www.collectorsclub.org)) receives ongoing enhancements based on member feedback. Please contact us at [info@collectorsclub.org](mailto:info@collectorsclub.org) with feedback, comments or questions.

We regret to inform you of the passing of Dr. Richard Maisel, long time resident member and British Empire Study Group stalwart

The Membership Committee extends a grateful "Thank You" to those who have helped with our staffing, outreach and recruitment efforts at several recent philatelic events. It is a pleasure to be "out and about" again (with due regard to safety guidelines).

Explore our website and see  
just how much more  
the Collectors Club  
can offer.  
[www.collectorsclub.org](http://www.collectorsclub.org)

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark E. Banchik, Membership Co-Chair  
Lawrence Hunt, Membership Co-Chair

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☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

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(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0	
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0	
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f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	769.5	770	
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	110.5	111	
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	880.0	880	
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