

From the Stamp Specialist:

Miscellany

by George B. Sloane

(From The Stamp Specialist, Volume I, Part I, published in 1939)

A “MISCELLANY” collection can be anything that you choose to make it, and I think that is one of its principal attractions—its rugged individualism. You need have no particular goal in mind, you just follow along wherever the material leads. Such a thing as “completeness” is something that you will never give serious thought to, as you acquire one item after another. You can knock off and quit whenever the spirit moves you, and pick it up again at any time in the future and carry on just where you left off.

It is entirely up to the owner, and the collection can constitute fifty pages, just enough to fill an album, or it can be expanded to Kingdom Come. There are no limits. Material is available wherever you turn and the opportunity of securing many interesting pieces seems easier today than ever before. It need not, necessarily, be expensive, and many things will be acquired at a cost of no more than a few cents.

The primary requisite is a little ingenuity and a sense of seeing a story in a stamp, or a set of stamps, or a cover, even though comparatively ordinary and commonplace. You could probably go through your own collection now and find innumerable items that would fit nicely into a Miscellany Collection, or among some discarded material that does not seem to fit into your present collecting scheme. Keep your eyes constantly alert for likely material, see what your dealer has on hand that he calls “something out of the usual run,” or watch your stamp papers for a tip now and then.

My own collection has been several years in the making. I had no special plan as to where I was going but I kept one idea before me. I tried to keep in mind the non-collector, such material as would interest someone who

had never collected stamps, with the purpose of hoping to show him that there is something fascinating about this hobby, to try to present philately to him in such a light that his curiosity would be aroused sufficiently to look into it further, and arranged in such a manner that he could get some favorable understanding of the subject. I was quite sure, too; that it would at the same time interest the experienced collector.

From this point I will try to detail something of what I have assembled in this collection....

One item that I acquired at a modest price and that most people, seemingly, have found of intense interest wherever I have exhibited it is a US. 1¢ postal card, one of those mailed out by the thousands by the chief of police of Philadelphia, shortly after the kidnapping of Charlie Ross from his home in Germantown, Pa., July 1, 1874.

Shown here is the back of this card [with] a photograph of the Ross child, with a full description detailed, and the notice of \$20,000 reward offered for his return. There must still be many of these cards about the country.

A more expensive item is a copy of the 2 shilling, 6 pence, blue embossed impression on heavy paper, the most famous stamp in American history, the British Stamp Tax of 1765, "Taxation without representation," imposed by Act of Parliament, March, 1765 upon the American Colonists, and which aroused angry opposition in the Colonies. Although repealed the next year, it was the beginning of resistance to the Crown in America, and one of the direct causes leading to the War of Independence. Few people are familiar with this stamp because of the incorrect illustrations which have appeared in many histories picturing the ordinary, and common, British revenue stamps of contemporary period. The stamp, however, is easily identified by the word America, which is shown at the top of the design. On my album page, this

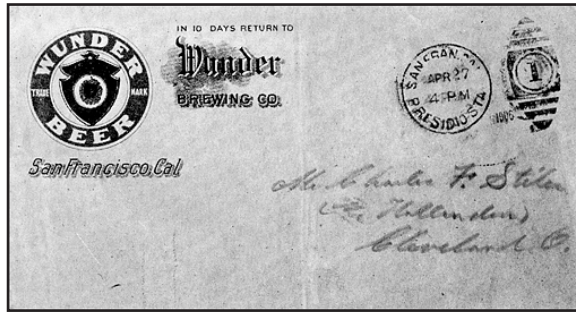




Scott RM31, the 2 Shillings 6 pence General Issue Revenue Tax stamp

stamp is accompanied by a picture, cut from an early history, showing the stamp act riots and giving a brief resume of the disturbances in various towns. This is of exceptional interest because most everyone has read the story in his school days and it still lingers in memory....

The San Francisco earthquake and fire finds items in this collection. There is an envelope, again without a stamp, postmarked, "San Francisco, CaL, Presidio Sta., April 27, 1906," addressed to Cleveland, and in pencil. During the



Earthquake letter from San Francisco, April 1906.

week of the conflagration following the earthquake, the Post Office Department waived the regulations and letters were permitted to be sent through the mails free of postage. The San Francisco post office was completely wrecked and the post offices in nearby cities were soon unable to supply postage stamps. Upon learning of the situation, the Washington postal authorities suspended the regulations and for several days thereafter people wrote letters and mailed them wherever they could. Postal employees stuck it through, collecting and sending the letters ahead without postage. It was the first time since the Civil War that Uncle Sam carried letters free of postage, and even in the war days the privilege applied only to soldiers and sailors and the postage was collected at the other end from the recipients....

Laughs are easily produced by the injection of a little humor and a set of stamps such as [shown below] will

do it nicely. These relate to Dr. Cook's "Discovery" of the North Pole, which has been called one of the great hoaxes of history.

In 1908, Dr. Frederick A. Cook returned from the Arctic regions announcing that he had been first to reach the North Pole, and at once he received great honors and was widely acclaimed. Soon after, Admiral Robert E. Peary, who is actually credited with the discovery of the Pole, April 6, 1909, arrived on the scene and challenged Cook's

TON, SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 12, 1909—SIXTY EIGHT PAGES. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

NOW TO WEIGH THEM.

POLAR WAR IS MORE SERIOUS

Peary Again Says Dr Cook Is Fooling the Public.

Latter's Story Is Borne Out by Peary's Account, However.

Both Explorers Likely to Reach New York at Same Time.

SUPPORTERS OF COOK AROUSED
"Gold Brick" Phrase Stirs Their Ire.
Immediate Substitution Demanded

TARIFF BOARD IS NAMED BY TAFT

PEARY'S SHIP MUCH DAMAGED
Battered by Ice, Capt Neilsen Says.

Peary's second and last installment of his story of the dash to the pole, printed in full in the evening edition of the Globe yesterday, and there in actual integrity of his own account, but was supplemented by a brief and stirring dispatch from Seattle Harbor, in which he reiterated the denunciation of Dr. Cook, and threw the doctor's claim that he reached the pole a year ahead of Peary a good berth handed to the public. This adds to the interest attaching to the fight between the great explorers the matter of which the public is ever sure at sea about that when Peary first declared that Cook is not telling the truth. Peary goes further in the second denunciation of Cook by saying that he has absolute proof to refute the claim of Dr. Cook that he reached the pole a year ahead of Peary or at any other time.

The front page of the Boston Sunday Globe, September 12, 1909

claims. A wide controversy raged which ultimately resulted in the complete exposure of Cook and his confession that his great "discovery" was pure fiction.

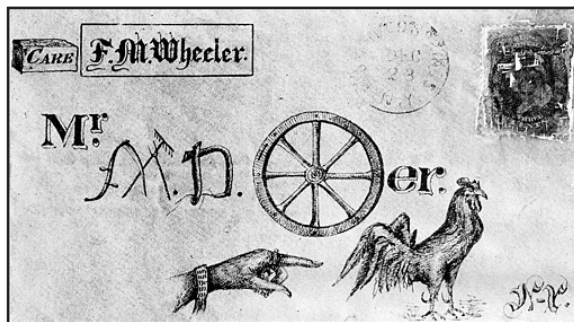
While this controversy was at its height, a joker conceived a set of stamps purporting to be a special "North Pole Post." Modeled after the 2¢ stamp of the Hudson-Fulton issue, then current, there were three varieties in this "set," a "1 tusk," green, inscribed "Peary Land," a scene showing a walrus amid icebergs; a "2 bones," red, "Cook Land," showing the "Dog Sled Mail"; and a "5 skins," blue,



“Nobody’s Land,” portraying two figures, presumably Cook and Peary, one holding an American flag, while each with one hand supported an icy post, to indicate the North Pole.

The “Believe It or Not” and other cartoons of this style in recent years have frequently publicized letters with curious addresses laid out in the form of puzzles, code, and what-not, which reached the addressees unerringly and without undue delay, but letters addressed in this way are by no means new.

I have such a cover used in the early [eighteen]sixties, the name and address concealed in a rebus, skillfully executed in pen and ink drawings, but it probably did not provide too great a riddle for the Post Office Department, even in that day. Postal employees already had long experience in deciphering poorly addressed letters and soon developed an uncanny ability in this respect. But today, in accordance with



The Sloane cover, to M.D. Wheeler, Han[d]cock, N.Y.



Can you solve this Rebus puzzle? (Answer, below)

postal regulations, the Department wants no time wasted with letters deliberately addressed in [this] manner, and clerks are instructed to promptly consign them to the Dead Letter Office.

When one does go through, it is only because someone was intrigued with it and determined to work it out.

** Rebus cover address:
Mr. Arrowsmith, 80 Lichfield Road, Bowe*

A single stamp can often be chosen and an interesting page mounted up devoted entirely to that item. A good subject is the 2¢ black, Jackson, of 1863. An early engraving of Andrew Jackson, similar to the head as portrayed on the stamp



A good source for an engraving is an engraved FDC, such as this Artcraft FDC for Sc. 2216g, one of the 1986 Ameripex Presidents stamps.



2¢ "Black Jack", Sc. 73

can be obtained with little difficulty at almost any old book store. An engraving not too large is desirable, and after it is mounted to the album page, a small specialized lot of the stamps can be arranged around it to suit your taste. In this arrangement an unused single or two of the stamps, several used examples, some of the grills, and a few cancellation varieties will quickly complete the page, and the addition of a proof of the stamp will help.

The U.S. 1847 issue [Sc. 1 & 2] should certainly be represented in the collection,



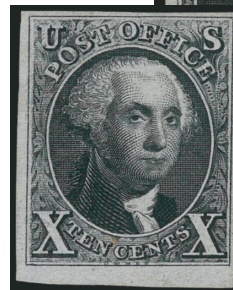
Sc. 1



Sc. 3



Sc. 2



Sc. 4

either in singles, or on cover, to show the first U.S. postage stamps. If you add a set of the so-called reprints [Sc. 3 & 4], you can include the story that these are official counterfeits, or imitations, made up by the government to complete the sets for the Centennial Exhibition, of 1876, when it was discovered that the original dies were unavailable.



Above, 1857 2¢, Sc. 26, on Bentz & Lutz "Wines, Brandies, and Liquors" advertising cover;

Right, 1895 2¢, Sc. 265, on Seabury & Johnson "Medicinal, Surgical and Antiseptic Specialties" all-over advertising cover



One may take a few examples of corner cards on envelopes and show a form of early advertising by

direct mail. While the flap envelope was invented earlier, it first came into general use about 1850 and its advertising possibilities were quickly recognized. Many and varied were the devices employed to catch the fancy and interest of the public. Two or three well chosen corner cards on covers used in the early [18] fifties will put this page across distinctively, and two or three pages of them will not lessen their appeal.



"Dont Worry Use Sunlight Soap" on back of New Zealand 1882 1p, Sc. 61

The advertising theme can be enlarged upon further. A page can be dedicated to commercial advertising on the stamps, and one of my pages shows a series of New Zealand stamps with advertising matter printed on the backs of the adhesives, a practice indulged in by this British colony during

the nineties. In recent years France has sold some of the margins around sheets of stamps for advertising by commercial firms, and Italy and Belgium have added



Philatelic advertising on label attached to Belgium 1936 1 franc, Sc. 284

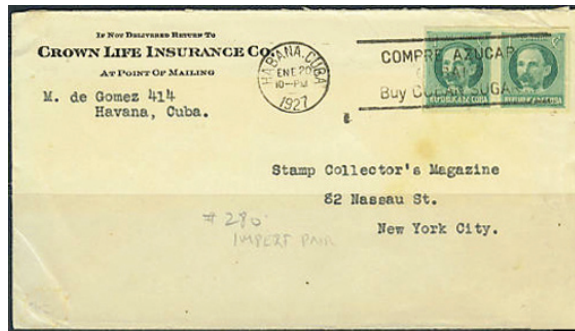
blanks adjoining the stamps for the printing of advertising. There are similar instances among other stamp issuing countries.

Then there is national advertising done by the countries themselves, not alone in the stamp designs, but in the postmarks.

An interesting page of these postmarks, neatly cut out of the envelopes to show both stamp and postmark, can be arranged! Some of these I have selected are, "Buy Cuban Sugar" (shown—**can someone tell us about the addressee, "Stamp Collector's Magazine"?**); "Buy Siam Rice. Best in the World"; "Holiday This Year in Canada"; "Buy Made in Newfoundland Goods"; "Belgium, Spa,—Health Waters for Rheumatism, Heart Ailments, Anaemia."

I have a nice series of pages showing letters that have been through wrecks in transportation. I show a letter coming from Japan, addressed to New York, that was damaged by fire in a disastrous railroad accident, the wreck of the 20th Century

Limited, eastbound from Chicago. The train ran into an open switch and was wrecked at Mentor. Ohio, June 21, 1905. The edges of this letter are charred from the flames and it carries a printed note affixed by the New York post office explaining the cause for its condition. By searching through newspaper files in the Public Library I learned some details of the accident and that much important mail was completely destroyed. Some of these notes I incorporated on the album page to supplement the item.



An 1894 cover from Vancouver, British Columbia, to London, England with purple handstamp "Damaged by wreck of mail train on Lake Champlain New York" and manuscript notation "Train went over Bridge under water for several days".



Reverse of cover carried on the Oregon when it was wrecked off Fire Island, N.Y., with explanatory sticker of the N.Y.P.O. Postmaster.

Next in order is a letter recovered from the sea, lost in the sinking of the Steamer Oregon, March 14, 1886, off Fire Island, N. Y., and recovered from the wreck four months

later. This letter, which was mailed from Germany to the United States, is without a stamp. That, of course, was lost through submersion. The New York postmaster attached a sticker to the back of the cover giving the story.

The series would not be complete without a letter from an airplane smash-up, and so I present one from a plane that was destroyed while carrying the mail. With this I have the full story to accompany it in the form of a newspaper clipping describing how the all-metal craft, crippled in flight, took fire while approaching Toledo, and exploded in landing, the two mail fliers dying while strapped in their seats. The envelope is badly burned at one side, and there is the customary notice with it from the post office, "The accompanying mail was salvaged from an airplane in the Coast to Coast Air Mail Service which was wrecked

near Luckey, Ohio, at about 2 pm., Sept. 14, 1920.—Postmaster, Toledo, Ohio." The explosion scattered 400 pounds of mail all over the countryside, and the postmaster of Luckey, and his aides, went around the fields gathering up all they could find.



The ultimate air ship crash cover, from the May 6, 1937 crash of the Hindenburg, with stamps that include Count von Zeppelin on the 1934 3 mark, Sc. C56

Precancels. A page shows miscellaneous types, going back to some of the early designs such as the Glen Alien, Va., star (shown), the Fort Wayne, Ind., "tombstone" type, Cincinnati horseshoe, etc., also some of the handstamped varieties, the vertical overprints, and the more modern styles. It covers the subject sketchily, but conveys the object.



It covers the subject sketchily, but conveys the object.

Cancellations on U. S. stamps, designs, types, devices, and the rest provide an extensive field for philatelic operations. In a Miscellany collection you can give them as much or as little emphasis as you like, and it is a subject that can be represented in many ways.



1873 Continental Bank Note 6¢, Sc. 159 with New York Foreign Mail (N.Y.F.M.) geometric cancel

One of the most attractive pages in my collection, at least from my viewpoint is a group of the "Foreign Mail" cancellations, special postmarks comprising geometric forms, rosettes, and fancy stars, which were in use at the

New York post office during the period from 1871 to 1877, and which according to late researches, appear to have been used exclusively in the cancelling of stamps on outgoing foreign mail matter. There are innumerable types and variations of these postmarks but most of them run to a general and characteristic style. Many had but a brief existence and it seems each design was used for a short time, some only for a week, when a new design would be brought into service. Twenty-five stamps complete this page of mine, and all values of the Bank Note series, 1¢ to 90¢, are present.

To Be Continued