

Book Reports

May - June 2014 Volume 11, Issue 2



STAMPS DELIVER KNOWLEDGE

Postage Stamps as Coins

Dr. Satyendra K. Agrawal

[Editor's note: In the March-April issue of Book Reports, we reprinted the first half of an article on stamps as currency by Dr. Satyendra Agrawal, originally published online in the Indian philatelic blog Rainbow Stamp News. The second part of the article deals with stamps used as coins. The story of encased postage begins, as it did with postage currency, during the American Civil War.]

In the USA, John Gault, a Boston sewing-machine salesman, proposed the encasement of stamps in circular metal discs made of brass with a mica front, into which a postage stamp could be installed. It received a patent in August of 1862 for "Design for Encasing Government Stamps."



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His firm, Scovill & Co, then issued the encased stamps in various denominations using the 1861 issue - the 1, 3, 5, 10, 12, 24, 30 and 90-cent stamps (Scott #63-72). Except for the values of 5 and 10 cents, most denominations did not lend themselves well as coins and the government did not approve of private money.



Gault sold this “stamp money” to merchants at small premium to meet the cost of production. Advertisements for products and services were stamped on back of the metal casing.



“Ayer’s Pills” are among the most frequent advertisements on U.S. encased postage, but businesses from hatters to hotels to dry goods merchants made use of the opportunity.

Besides the coin-shaped encased postage, there were also rectangular shapes that contain two or more stamps. These strips had a metal backing with a mica covering, usually encasing three 3c stamps, for a total of 9 cents with open ends. Stamps could slide in or out.



Used as currency, Gault’s encased stamps became popular for a few months only, as the post office department refused to sell Mr. Gault the necessary stamps. They felt he was competing with their postage currency notes. This greatly limited Gault’s enterprises by late 1862 and brought them to an end the following year. Of the approximately 750,000 pieces sold, only 3,500-7,000 are believed to have survived. All are very scarce today as they were used for such a short time.

Encased postage stamps continued their development during the First World War and in later years. They existed in most European countries, particularly in France, Monaco, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Argentina, Greece, Italy and Norway.



In addition, a few more countries adopted the idea of encasing stamps in metal with an advertisement on their back. These were used as currency whenever they faced the shortage of small coins. Notable examples are from Denmark, Indochina and Spain.



The “Jetons” of France

The period immediately following the First World War saw increased use of encased postage stamps. The former warring countries were struggling to stabilize their currencies and the steep inflation drove up the prices of gold and silver.

European countries, chiefly Germany, France, Austria, Denmark and Italy, all followed the same procedure for encasing the stamps. Germany used aluminum and celluloid holders whereas France issued similar discs with a numeral on one side indicating the value of the encased stamp. These are known as ‘Jetons’ [from “timbres-jetons” or “money-stamps” in French] and were patented on March 29, 1920 by Edouard Bouchaud-Praceiq. They are usually 33mm in diameter and are made of aluminum or tin. They are also made colourful by applying pigment to the tin base. Red, black and gold are the predominant colours, but green, cream and others were also applied. Money-stamps were produced in France between 1920 and 1923.



Most of French money-stamps feature the graceful Sower, designed by Louis-Oscar Roty. The most commonly used denominations of sower stamps were the 5c green, 10c red and 25c blue cameo sower. The 15c green lined sower and the 5c orange cameo sower was also used, but these are scarce. The 20c brown, 35c violet and 10c green sower encased jetons are extremely rare. Approximately 220 tokens of different brands are known to exist.

The advertisements on holders of these money stamps are treasure trove for thematic collectors. The variety of advertisers and the range of goods and services are astonishing. They include suppliers of pharmaceutical and petroleum products, wine and spirit merchants, brewers, hotel proprietors, owners of brasseries and restaurants, chocolate manufacturers, dealers in oysters, manufacturers of footwear and auto accessories, suppliers of optical and photographic equipment, an oceanographic museum in Monaco, and many more.



Opel automobile ads are found on a number of German issues, which was by far the most prolific country to use encased postage. Advertisements were printed on or pressed into the metal casing.

These gems can illuminate and enhance a topical collection, but it should be noted that neither the holder with the advertisement nor the whole were sanctioned by the post office; encapsulated stamps were used quite explicitly for a non-postal purpose. However, internationally [and sometimes even within their country of origin] their use was often looked on with great sympathy.

Dr. Satyendra Agrawal is an award-winning national and international philatelic exhibitor and writer. He is author of "The Rose (A-Z of Rose Philately)," "History of Indian Miniature Paintings through Philately," and three other titles.

References

Asterisk indicates book is part of the NPL collection.

* **A Collector's Guide to Postage & Fractional Currency: The Pocket Change of the Union Army.** (1st ed.) / Kravitz, Robert J. — San Francisco: Arkives Press, [2012].

A Guidebook of United States Fractional Currency / Rothert, Matt — Whitman Publishing Company, 1963.

* **Civil War Encased Stamps: The Issuers and Their Times** / Reed, Fred L., III — Port Clinton, OH: BNR Press, 1995.

* **Encased Postage Stamps: U.S. and Foreign: The Use of Stamps as Money** / Slabaugh, Arlie R. — Chicago: Hewitt Bros, 1967.

The Frederick R. Mayer Postage Currency and Encased Postage Collection [Auction catalog] / Heritage Auction Gallery: Heritage Currency Auction, Sept. 27, 2007

* **The Standard Catalogue of Encased Postage Stamps** / Hodder, Michael J. and Q. David Bowers — Wolfboro, NH: Bowers and Merena Galleries, 1989.

* **The Summit Collection of United States Encased Postage** [Auction catalog] / Siegel: Robert Siegel, April 2008.

United States Postage & Fractional Currency 1862-1876 / Christoph, Art and Krause, Chet — Numismatic News, Iola, Wisc.

stampcircuit.com/Stamp-Auction-Collectable/kapselgeld-briefmarkengeld-encased-postage-stamps-stamp-money

www.thecurrencycollector.com/pdfs/The_Significance_of_Stamps_Used_on_Bank_Notes.pdf

www.notgeld.com/uncategorised/kapselgeld

Addendum: Currency as postage

A recent web search turned up an interesting postal use of an 1862 5¢ postage currency banknote. This was non-contemporary (1901), however, the pasted-on note was treated as a stamp – cancelled and delivered without postage due. (The first class letter rate was only 2¢.)



###

Answer to March-April Stumper

The stumper from last issue focused on an 1881 cover with an unusual “carrier” backstamp from Washington, DC. The question was “What did this marking indicate and why did it begin to disappear around the mid-1880s?”

One reader, Dale Forster, was able to supply an answer. Dale has authored an article on carrier service to street addresses in western cities that will appear in the June “Western Express” newsletter of the Western Cover Society. The library stocks a current subscription.

“Before cities adopted carrier service all mail had to be picked up at the post office. Regarding the Haverhill, Massachusetts cover, I believe carrier service began in Haverhill in 1879. In July 1879 the Postmaster General extended eligibility for carrier service to towns with populations of 20,000 or with \$20,000 in annual postal revenue. By 1880 free carrier delivery was offered in 104 cities. The Haverhill cover is unusual because it does not have a street address, yet the CARRIER backstamp shows it was delivered. I have seen handstamps from a number of towns including Portland, Oregon on covers without street addresses used after carrier service was established with language “Have your Mail Addressed to Street and Number.” Most covers bearing these markings seem to have been delivered, although I have seen a few which were returned to sender or sent to the dead letter office when a street address could not be found.

In the West, I believe San Francisco was the first city to offer postal carrier service, beginning in 1869. I show in my article that Portland established carrier service in October 1879 and Seattle not until October 1887. In the 1870s San Francisco used a circular CARRIER handstamp similar to the Haverhill marking. I believe these CARRIER markings were phased out in the 1880s and 1890s because most small towns had free carrier service by the 1890s. In fact RFD service was initiated in the 1890s and free delivery was offered to most rural customers by the early 20th century.”



Book Review: The Philatelic Truck

Greg Alexander

The Philatelic Truck, 1982, James H. Bruns, Bureau Issues Association, Inc.

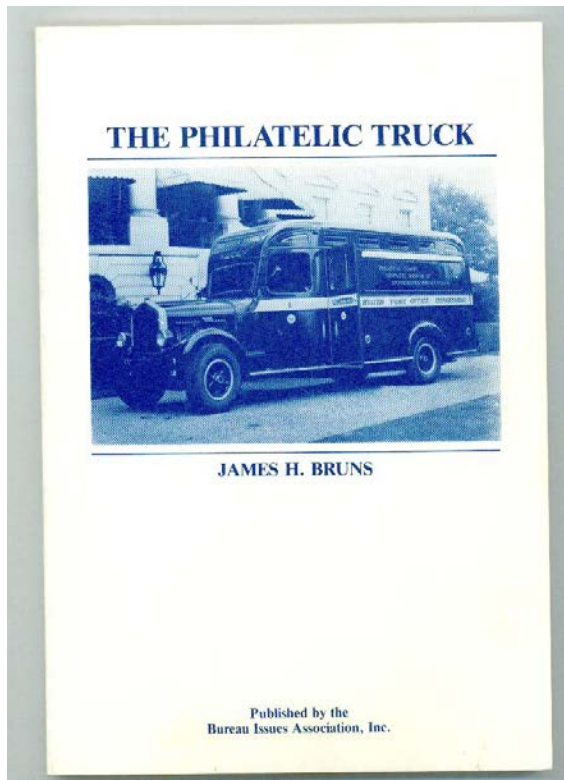


I recently added a cover to my collection, which prompted me to do a little research regarding the Philatelic Truck, a legendary vehicle that is likely to be at least somewhat familiar to most older collectors. The cover is “franked” with a Philatelic Truck souvenir sheet, on which a New York City meter was stamped with the date June 1, 1939. The sheet also shows an autograph of Ralph A. Davis.



James Bruns’ “The Philatelic Truck” offers a wealth of information about the history of the truck, how it came about, where it toured, and what it had to offer visitors. Supporting the story are dozens of photos and diagrams of the truck and its contents, along with the people who manned it. Ralph Davis was the chief supervisor of the truck, and travelled with it for the entire 28 months it was on the road, frequently sleeping inside as a de facto security guard. Bruns includes plenty of personal insight, gleaned from interviews with Davis about the philatelic journey.

The first public mention of the truck was in August of 1938 – a short article that appeared in *The New York Sun* describing the mission of the truck and the exhibits it would contain. The intent was to “stimulate interest in stamp collecting among the youth of the country,” particularly those in rural areas, by offering a mobile philatelic museum. The truck would provide an opportunity to view specimens of every U.S. stamp issued, from the 1847 Franklin and Washington issue to the present. The book shows photos of each handsomely framed display, which included the Columbian and Trans-Mississippi issues, airmails such as the Graf Zeppelins, and hundreds of others sure to pique the interest of young visitors.



An intriguing piece of machinery was prominently featured in the center of the truck: a miniature Stickney printing press. The model press simulated printing the souvenir sheets (these were actually produced in large rolls specifically for this exhibit by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing). The “press” slowly rolled out and cut off a souvenir sheet for each visitor. Too slowly, it turned out, to effectively supply the large crowds that bustled past the displays, and the staff soon resorted to handing out precut sheets. The first year, these sheets were gummed, but when they turned up stuck to nearby windows, cars and the truck itself, Davis requested all further sheets be ungummed (which they were).

A good number of well-illustrated pages are devoted to the souvenir sheet, including initial design proofs and its philatelic use on cover. I was delighted to find a photo of a cover very similar to mine, dated on the same day.

Starting at the White House, the Philatelic Truck covered an extraordinary amount of territory between May 9, 1939 (Washington, DC) and Dec. 12, 1941 (San Diego, Calif.). As Bruns writes, “In all, the truck logged 20,750 miles, visiting 490 towns, villages and cities, and had 483,976 visitors.” He includes a tour map and a detailed travel log and record of sales plotting out each visit and merchandise sold. Interestingly, in 1939 “A Description of United States Postage Stamps – Junior Edition” was printed for the tour and sold from the truck for 10¢ apiece. The NPL has a copy in its collection.

Alas, the Philatelic Truck never made it to the Pacific Northwest and saw very little of the western half of the country. The tour was scuttled following Pearl Harbor, when the U.S. entered WWII and the government shifted its attention to the war effort. The truck was hastily driven from Yuma, Arizona to California, the exhibits removed and returned to Washington.

The Philatelic Truck itself met an ignoble fate; after being dismantled in Los Angeles it was sent north and was last seen rotting away behind the Rincon Annex of the San Francisco Post Office. A sad end to a historically significant vehicle that probably did more to inspire American stamp collectors than any other truck in the nation.

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PIPEX Gives NPL Some Exposure

PIPEX 2014, held at the Jantzen Beach Red Lion Hotel on May 9-11 proved to be a good opportunity for the Northwest Philatelic Library to increase its visibility. The library had a prominent table on the bourse floor and was able to raise nearly \$500 through the sale of duplicate books. We also received a very generous donation of Chinese philatelic literature from a dealer at the show, which will be detailed in a future newsletter.

The NPL participated in the one-frame exhibit, with collective panels contributed by members of the library board. Topics included large-sized revenue stamps, the “Penny Black,” and antique perforations gauges. Comments overheard indicated visitors found the exhibit interesting.

NPL President Orlie Trier was surprised to discover he was scheduled to host a presentation about the library, but quickly rose to the occasion. The audience was small, but included several key members of other philatelic groups who wanted to learn more about what the library could provide. We hope to build on these new connections for future collaboration.



NPL Secretary Don Overstreet and President Orlie Trier staffed the library booth, displaying a number of duplicate books for sale.



In the exhibit area, the NPL's eclectic one-frame drew attention. More information could be found on each topic by visiting the library.

Member Survey on the Way

In an effort to better understand our members' collecting interests and how best to serve you, the Northwest Philatelic Library is planning a short survey. This is likely to be either a brief phone call or a mail-in form. We'd like to learn what areas you think we should focus on and whether you're aware of literature that may be of interest.

If you get a call, please take a moment to offer your insight. The library is very interested in what you'd like to share with us.

Surplus Literature for Sale

As we receive donations, the library frequently encounters books and catalogs, which are already in our collection. These are either exchanged with other libraries or offered to collectors at a discount on fair market value. Funds raised go towards acquisition of needed books. Below are just a portion of the titles currently available; inquire at the library front desk to see what else we have to offer.

AUTHOR	TITLE	YEAR	PRICE
AAMS	American Air Mail Catalogue, Vol. 1, 6th ed,	1998	\$45.00
AAMS	American Air Mail Catalogue, Vol. 2, 6th ed,	1998	\$45.00
Barklow	The Old and New: History of PO's Wallowa Ct., signed	1982	\$5.00
Bauer	Franklin D. Roosevelt & the Stamps of the U.S. 1933-45	1993	\$10.00
Boeger	Handbook on U.S. Luminescent Stamps	1975	\$22.50
Broderick	Civil Censorship in the United States During World War II	1980	\$18.00
Bruns	The Philatelic Truck	1982	\$10.00
Chaintrier	Balloon Post of the Siege of Paris	1976	\$15.00
Clark & Ruckle	The Street Railway Post Offices of Baltimore	undated	\$20.00
Crofton/Corfield	Adhesive Fiscal & Telegraph Stamps of British India	1905	\$60.00
CS & CSS	Christmas Seal Catalogue [U.S. National]	2006	\$22.50
Current	Overprints on British Stamps for Use Abroad [2 copies]	2002	\$20.00
Datz	Errors on US Postage Stamps, 2002 Catalog	2001	\$1.00
Deegm	Machin Handbook	1993	\$20.00
Devol	Establishment of the 1st US Govt Post Offices in NW Ter.	1975	\$10.00
Frickstad	A Century of California Post Offices	1955	\$25.00
Frost	Special Zeppelin Mail and Postcards	2000	\$20.00
Goodwin	The 1861-1868 US Stamps	undated	\$5.00
Helbock	Frontier Centennial: Western Postal Route Atlas	1981	\$25.00
Karer	US Naval Slogan Cancels in Canal Zone & Panama 1908-48	2nd	\$8.00
Kriebel	Correio Aereo: History of Air Mail Service in Brazil	1996	\$20.00
Kronstein	Rocket Mail Flights of the World to 1986	1986	\$10.00
	Angels to Zeppelins, Guide to Persons, Objects,		
Lehnus	Topics on US stamps	1982	\$5.00
Livingston	The Shanghai Postal System	undated	\$10.00
Megson	American Exposition Postcard 1870-1920	1992	\$20.00
Michel	Asien 1991-2 (A-J), Ubersee Band 5	1991/2	\$45.00
Michel	Deutschland-Spezial	1999	\$15.00
Michel	Schweiz/Liechtenstein-Special	1989	\$70.00
Robertson	Post Roads, Post Towns and Postal Rates	1961	\$20.00
Schmid	How to Detect Damaged, Altered and Repaired Stamps	1979	\$10.00
Short	Glider Mail	1987	\$10.00
Thorp	Bartels Catalogue of stamped Envelopes and Wrappers of US	1943	\$17.50
Tucker	United States Slogan Postmark Catalog	1938	\$10.00
	Catalogue of Malaysia-Singapore, Brunei Stamps and		
Unattributed	Postal Stationery	1991	\$20.00
Unattributed	Ivory Stamp Club Album	1934	\$7.00
Unitrade	2007 Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Postage	2007	\$20.00
Wood	Where in the world? An Atlas for Stamp Collectors	1983	\$10.00
Yang	Yang's Postage Stamp & Postal History Catalog of Hong Kong	1994	\$10.00

New on our Shelves

The following resources have been added to our collection:

Catalogs

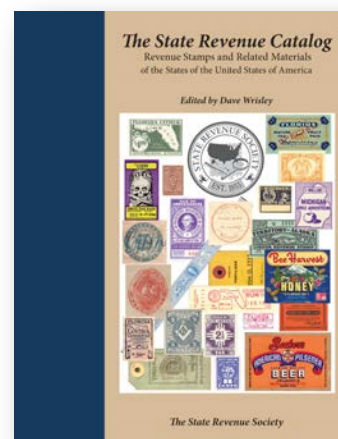
Domfil, **Thematic Stamp Catalogue: Fauna/Birds**, 24th ed., Domfil, Barcelona, Spain, 1999

Facit, **Special 2007**, Sweden, 2007

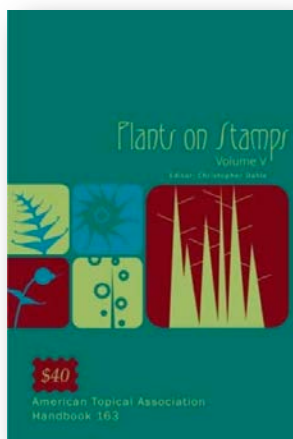
Gibbons, Stanley, **Collect Birds on Stamps**, 5th ed., Stanley Gibbons, London, 2003

Roder, Karim, **USA: Variable Denomination Stamps (1989-2013)**, San Bernadino, CA, 2014

Wrisley, Dave, Ed., **The State Revenue Catalog**, State Revenue Society, Lincroft, NJ. 2013



Books



Dahle, Christopher, Ed., **Plants on Stamps, Volume V**, ATA Handbook 163, American Topical Association, Carterville, IL, 2013

Ganz, Cheryl R., **Favorite Finds**, Smithsonian Postal Museum, Washington, D.C., 2013

Ganz, Cheryl R., **Pacific Exchange: Chine and U.S. Mail**, Smithsonian Postal Museum, Washington, D.C., 2014

Kraft, Bill, **Maybe We Need a Letter from God: The Star Trek Stamp**, Gorham Printing, Centralia, WA, 2013



DVD

Dahle, Christopher, Ed., **Plants on Stamps, Volume V**, ATA Handbook 163, American Topical Association, Carterville, IL, 2013

State Revenue News: 1959-2010 with 2011-13 Appended, State Revenue Society, Lincroft, NJ, 2011, 2012, 2013

Library Notes

Orlie Trier, NPL President

Former NPL president wins Helbock Award

Charles Neyhart, past president of the Northwest Philatelic Library, has been honored for his research and writing. He is the winner of the 2014 Richard W. Helbock prize for the best postal history article. Charles' article, "The 1905 Portland, Oregon, Lewis and Clark Exposition Postal Stations," appeared in the 2013 second quarter issue of *La Posta: The Journal of American Postal History*. In it he analyzes the impact of the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition on the operations of the Portland Post Office and resulting postal marks.

We congratulate our brother, Charles, for his excellent writing and research, some of which utilized NPL resources.

***Book Reports* needs your support**

We are always looking for material to share with readers of this newsletter. Contributions may be in the form of an article on a philatelic topic, a review of a relevant book, or a write-up on an interesting piece in your collection. It could be a short human interest story, like how you began collecting, how the philatelic library aided in your collecting interests, or a similar topic. We are willing to help you edit and we will format it to our space. Thanks in advance for your interest and thoughts.

In Appreciation

To the individuals listed below who have made recent donations of literature and other considerations to NPL, we thank you for your generosity. We want to assure you that we will make good use of these resources for our fellow philatelist and collectors.

Charles Neyhart
Bill Kraft
Manny Berman
Nelson Farris

Michael Dixon
Jon Stine
Bill Bieth
Lorraine Short

THANK YOU all for your support!

Northwest Philatelic Library, Inc.

President – *Orlie Trier*, Secretary – *Don Overstreet*, Treasurer – *Jim Correy*, Directors: *Greg Alexander*, *Darlene Lengacher*, *Isaac Oelgart* and *Wayne Weatherl*. Director of Sales – *Larry Spray*.

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