

# Book Reports

Jan. – Feb. 2015 Volume 12, Issue 1



## STAMPS DELIVER KNOWLEDGE

### Philatelic Libraries Embrace Technology

Greg Alexander



The library of the Royal Philatelic Society London is one of many currently undergoing expansion, both physically and technologically.

For several years, the Northwest Philatelic Library has been part of a consortium of similar organizations, which convene regularly to discuss projects and collaborations. The Philatelic Librarians Roundtable typically holds a conference call every month or two, facilitated by Tara Murray, director of the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL). Members include representatives from groups around U.S. and the world, including the Postal History

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Foundation, Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, Collectors Clubs of Chicago and New York (CCC and CCNY), Scandinavian Collectors Club, China Stamp Society, the Greene Foundation (Canada), and the Royal Philatelic Society London.

The individual and joint work being done by these organizations offers insight on the direction philatelic libraries (and libraries in

general) are headed in the future. As you might guess, much effort is being put into creating digitized, searchable content, accessible online. We thought NPL members might be interested in a short review of what's been accomplished in 2014.

Thanks to the work of Google and other academic archives, books of all types are being digitally scanned and processed to make the content searchable. In the philatelic community this movement shows great promise in the area of periodicals and journals, making information easy to find and reducing the need to keep physical copies of publications, which take up valuable shelf space. In the Northwest Philatelic Library, 25 to 30 percent of our shelves are stocked with magazines and journals — these are rarely viewed because the information they contain isn't indexed and requires too much effort to ferret out. Collectors and researchers would find a great deal of useful material if it were easily searchable.

The first step is indexing. At the APRL, volunteers are being trained on an ongoing basis and some have developed into dedicated indexers. One volunteer has contributed more than 2,500 index entries for "Linn's Stamp News," "American Philatelist" and "American Stamp Dealer & Collector." Index entries have also been contributed for recent years of "BNA Topics," the French journal "Les Feuilles Marchophiles," "Penny Post," and some back years of "American Revenuer." APRL is approaching journal editors directly, seeking anyone interested in indexing their publication for inclusion in the APRL's online catalog. Indexing can be done off-site by volunteers, at their leisure. The APRL has instructions for how to do this work and how to submit indexing in Excel or CSV files for loading.

In addition, the APRL is working with a host of regional libraries and the National Postal Museum Library, to upload their catalogs into a single database, the Philatelic Union Catalog. The Northwest Philatelic Library was one of the first to switch to the Union Catalog as its primary online catalog; Collectors Club of New York, the Spellman Museum, and Collectors Club of Chicago are all making similar transitions for their libraries. Participating libraries regularly update their new acquisitions to the Union Catalog.

Last year, the APRL loaded the records of the Wineburgh Philatelic Research Library at the University of Texas at Dallas. They also continue to add records from the Scandinavian Collectors Club Library, including audiovisual, and exhibits and collections of Åland, Faroes, Iceland and Sweden. Records of the China Stamp Society are being prepared for import into the Union Catalog. And as Google digitizes books for public access, philatelic-related titles are being linked to Union Catalog records.

Anticipating the surge of digital information, the APRL contracted for an additional server to host digital content and purchased another internal server. These will hold APS and APRL content that of affiliated organizations.

Across the Atlantic, the Royal Philatelic Society London is in the process of updating software for their Global Philatelic Library's online catalog, which should make their system easier to operate and more robust. The GPL database is easily the equal of the APRL's Union catalog in scope. Some record sharing has already been done between the Union Catalog and the Global Catalog; the two libraries are working out a regular schedule for transmission of records, possibly quarterly. The GPL is also putting time into indexing periodicals and has indexed more than 170 titles so far.

North of the border, Library & Archives Canada has transferred material to the Greene Foundation, which has been digitizing periodicals, including “Canadian Stamp News,” to make space for books. They also have a volunteer indexing individual auction catalogs. The Green is working with the University of Toronto on a program to catalog their 3D objects. They report a noticeable increase in requests since adding their records to the Global Philatelic Library.

There are also bricks and mortar projects underway. Last year, the APRL board approved financing for the next phase of library construction, which will include a new floor for the larger of the two buildings the library uses. The Royal Philatelic Society London has been planning a major remodel of their headquarters, including the library, with special attention paid to preservation of the historic architecture of the building they occupy. OSS members who have put so much work into renovating the clubhouse will be pleased to know they are in good company.

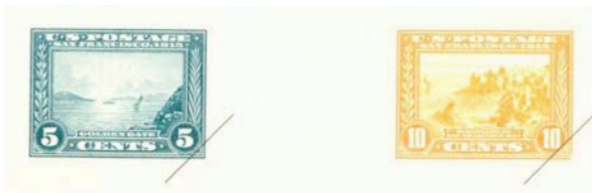
The next five years should open up an ocean of philatelic information for collectors to educate themselves on a wide range of topics. We encourage you to take advantage of it!

###

## **Bureau of Engraving and Printing releases philatelic print**

Greg Alexander

The 2015 Florida United Numismatist coin show might seem an odd venue to roll out a philatelic souvenir, but as the only show the BEP is attending this year it was a matter of necessity. The theme of the Bureau’s 2015 intaglio print program is the centennial of the opening of the Panama Canal. On that subject, a set of three engraved prints are being issued, two of which include reprints of the 1913 Panama Pacific International Exposition Issue (Scott 397-400).



This is the first “souvenir card” to include stamps since 2011. As a member of the collector advisory group who helped the BEP choose this year’s theme and design, I was impressed with the results.

The first card in the series features an eagle, a bust of Columbus, and the 5 and 10 cent PPIE stamps. A special print was released on Jan. 8 for coin show visitors (pictured). The second philatelic card, featuring the 1 and 2 cent PPIE stamps and the historic battleship USS San Diego, will be available March 24. Collectors may order the full set or individual cards online at [www.moneyfactorystore.gov/intaglioprints.aspx](http://www.moneyfactorystore.gov/intaglioprints.aspx).

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# Book Review: Printing Postage Stamps by Line Engraving

Charles Neyhart

**Printing Postage Stamps by Line Engraving**, 1981 (reprint), James H. Baxter, Quarterman Publications, Inc.

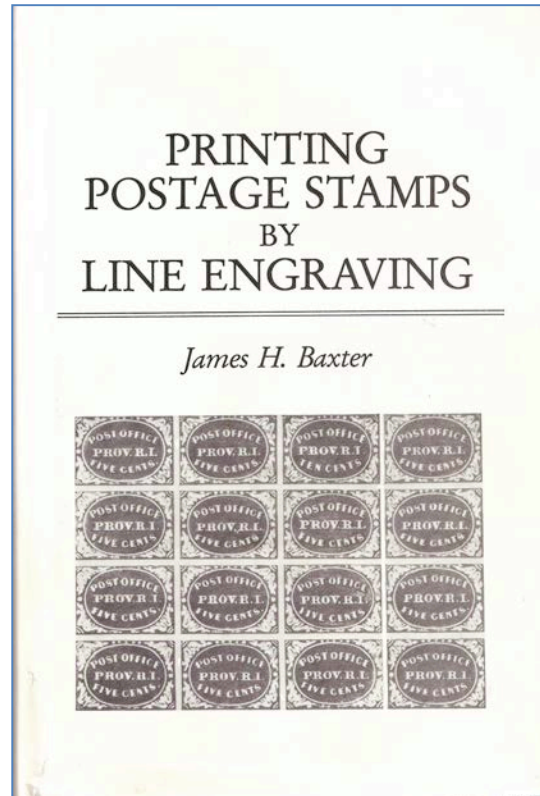
Shortly after retirement, I resumed collecting U.S. stamps and soon realized that I had an interest in production varieties, but also recognized that I was generally unprepared to correctly analyze them. Varieties that were a direct function of printing and the processing steps to finish a stamp appealed to me because they represented nonstandard results – outliers. The 2¢ Columbian “broken hat,” coil fakes, double impressions, sheet and coil waste, flat v. rotary output, precancel plates, and listed catalog “types” among others drew my attention. My desire to “solve” a given variety riddle was constrained, though, because I really didn’t know what clues to look for. Any guesses on my part were potentially unreliable. Discussions with other collectors were a helpful start. The Scott catalog went only so far in offering up possible explanations. I knew I needed better source material.

I found *Printing Postage Stamps by Line Engraving*, by James H. Baxter, out of necessity.

Most of the printing varieties of interest to me resulted during a time when line engraved recessed printing was predominant. An early use of the book for me was to distinguish flat from rotary plate printing results. At the time I was working with differentials in regard to U.S. Washington-Franklin coils printed on the Stickney rotary press. Many years later, I used it again to study differentials for Canadian Admiral coils printed on the American Bank Note Company’s sheet-fed rotary press. I am no longer surprised by the lasting value of this 164-page book.

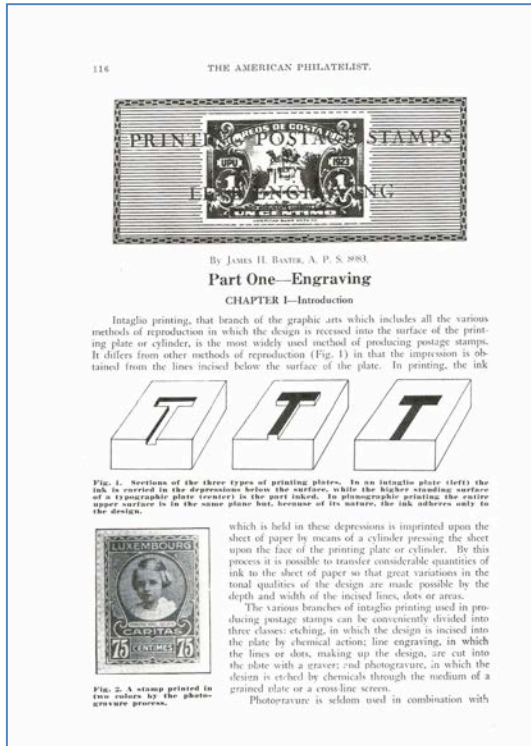
Baxter’s rationale for writing what turned out to be a series of 21 articles in *The American Philatelist* [from November 1937 to June 1939] was to help students of philately better understand the principles of line engraving as used by security printers to produce postage stamps. This understanding would ostensibly remove a serious handicap to conducting research into pressing philatelic problems of the day. Baxter later revised and expanded these articles and, in 1939, the APS published the compilation as a book.

I’ve heard anecdotally that Baxter was a printer, but I have not been able to confirm that. He is not listed in Hessler’s *The Engraver’s Line*. That notwithstanding, Baxter did his due diligence – corresponding with [“... thousands of letters were exchanged”], visiting [“... dozens of printing plants”] and interviewing representatives of printing organizations [“...]





several hundred workmen directly employed in the printing business”], both domestic and foreign – contacting 39 different government offices and nine private security printers.



*Printing Postage Stamps by Line Engraving* is written in three Parts: Engraving, Plate Making and Printing. Each is supported by individual chapters that develop sequentially within. Part One is 38 pages in length with five chapters; Part Two is 57 pages with seven chapters; and Part Three is 49 pages with five chapters. Baxter is patient; the writing style is spare, but straightforward and fully descriptive. Illustrations are chosen only to further explain difficult subjects. Baxter expands the subject matter by routinely including non-U.S. applications – it is not a distraction.

Part One is a full-range primer on line engraving, primarily on a steel die, both by hand and machine. There are actually illustrated drawings of how instruments are properly held in and worked by the engraver’s hand. From the types of engraving, to techniques, to stamp design, to proofs, to hardening and to fixing problems, one gets a wide-ranging sense about the engraving function, and, of

interest to me, how things might go awry.

Part Two is a step-by-step journey through the platemaking process, focusing on the traditional transfer roll and steel plate. The overall discussion is painstakingly thorough. The role, responsibilities and importance of a skilled siderographer [one who transfers an engraving from a master cylinder die onto a flat printing plate] are made clear here, starting with a proper plate layout. Suitable attention is devoted to potential transfer-based varieties including doubled and skewed entries. Possible means of remediation are then described. Common plate defects are identified and a toolbox of fixes is introduced. The essential steps involved in finishing a plate are described, followed by a short write-up of electrolytic platemaking. A full chapter is devoted to plate and marginal markings.

Part Three begins with a description of the various ways to apply moisture to stamp paper and warns of varieties caused by doing it improperly. Coverage of printing presses proceeds from the simple to the complex. At each stop, the design of the press and how it operates are laid out. Printing varieties are identified at relevant points. The hand roller press was a wise first choice here – how it operates is easy to visualize. Next up is the flat bed power press followed by the rotary press using curved plates; the latter including the web-fed Stickney and sheet-fed rotaries. Detailed descriptions and analyses of press operations are useful for identifying and explaining differences in press output. Gumming, perforating and stamp finishing steps are then presented in an easy to grasp way, either as an introduction or a review.

In 1981, the publisher, Quarterman Publications, asked Baxter to comment for a reissue of the original book. Apparently to no one’s surprise, including Baxter, there was not much revision

or addition necessary to update the original. It had stood the test of time as a standard reference work. Baxter wrote in the preface to the 1981 edition:

The fundamentals of the steel engraving process have changed very slightly in the last four decades. With the passage of time, however, technological improvements and labor-saving techniques have been introduced. But basically, the new procedures still retain the essential features that mark hand engraved stamps as works of art.

Because of the enduring substance of Baxter's original work, his updating comments were made in the form of easy-to-find footnotes!

Baxter was elected to the APS Writers Unit 30 Hall of Fame in 1986. And in 1996, one year after his death at age eighty-nine, he was named to the APS Hall of Fame for outstanding contributions to the advancement of philately.

*Printing Postage Stamps by Line Engraving* is available at NPL in the Stamp Production section. If you are interested in technically understanding how postage stamps are made, this is a fine place to start. I have relied on this little book to unravel all sorts of things that gave rise to production varieties. While the book may not directly address every production conundrum, it usually offers the means to do this and the confidence to undertake it. If you truly understand how something is supposed to work, it is far easier to figure out why it didn't.

###

## NW Philatelic Library is in Search of an Editor

The current editor of "Book Reports" is moving out of Portland, leaving us in need of some editorial assistance. Are you good with words? Do you have any experience with page layout? We could use your help!

Presently, the newsletter is created using Word, but could be done in any page layout or word processing program. Articles are often contributed by members; this is a great way to get to know the interests and areas of expertise of fellow collectors. The length and content of each issue is entirely up to the editor and duties might be divided between two or more volunteers.

If you have a little free time and a willingness to help keep the library's acquisitions and activities visible to our membership, please contact Orlie Trier at [nwpl@qwestoffice.net](mailto:nwpl@qwestoffice.net) or 503-867-4764.

## Answer to our Last Stumper

Our last issue's stumper featured gummed stamps with the text "City and County Self-Liquidating Scrip" from the City of Portland. The stumper asked readers the purpose of these stamps, when were they produced, and whether there were other denominations.



OSS member Paul Tremaine, an expert on Depression era scrip, wrote to provide an answer. The stamps, he explains, were issued to validate Depression scrip jointly issued by Multnomah County and the City of Portland:

"In March 1933, when President Roosevelt averted the banking crisis by declaring a 'bank holiday,' most municipalities issued scrip as a temporary alternative to cash. Some of it, like the Tenino (WA) scrip, was done on locally produced goods. Quilcene (WA) did it on oyster shells and Pendleton (OR) on 'Buckaroo Bucks' made of rawhide. Tenino even made 1 mil (1/10 of a cent) pieces to pay sales tax.

Multnomah County issued pieces in 25¢, 50¢ and \$1 denominations. The notes were good until December 31, 1933, when they would be 'self-liquidating' and had to be surrendered to be paid off. They acted a sort of a bond issue. The 52 stamps were pasted on the back to validate the front amount (the extra two stamps presumably paid the cost of producing and servicing the scrip).

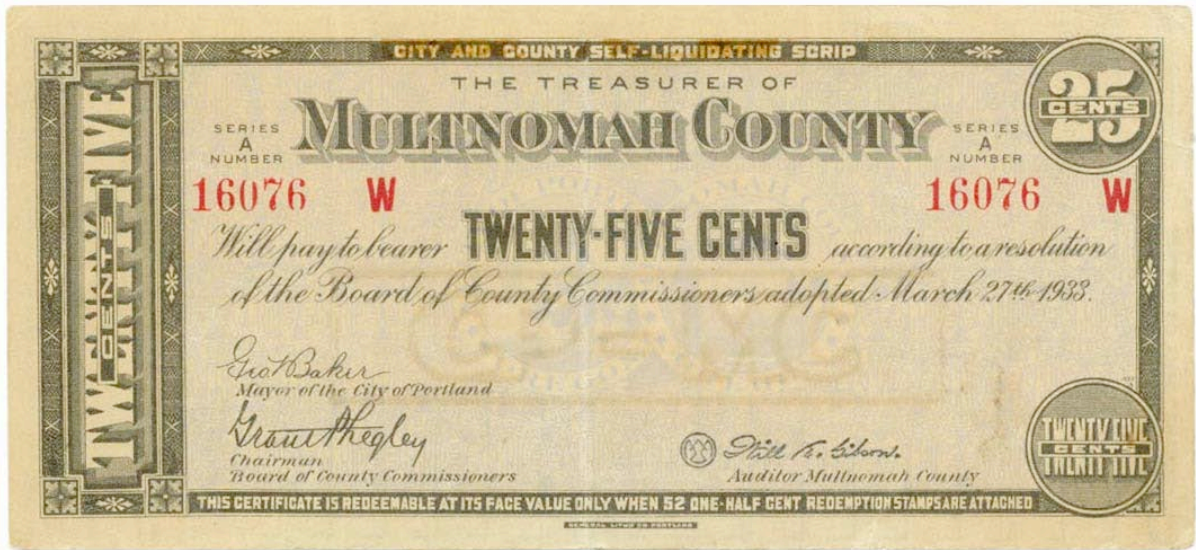
I assembled a large collection of over 4,000 Depression scrip "notes" – they can be found in porcelain, pulp paper (from Longview, WA), round wood pieces stamped on both sides, wood planks, linen and a host of other forms. They are a very interesting part of Americana."

Because the banking crisis lasted only a matter of weeks, Depression scrip didn't circulate for very long. The example below of the 25¢ Multnomah County scrip note shows only five validation stamps on the back, representing five transactions. It's unlikely any of these notes were completely filled with stamps.

Paul also helped solve the mystery of how this "A" series was numbered. Each denomination was assigned a code on both the bill and the stamps: A-W for 25¢, A-X for 50¢, and A-Y for the \$1 denomination. So why what became of A-Z?

Turns out a \$5 scrip note was considered but never issued – it exists only as a specimen. Which means there are probably specimens of a 10¢ validation stamp to go with it, likely in green. Keep your eyes open!





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From the Dec. 1869 edition ...

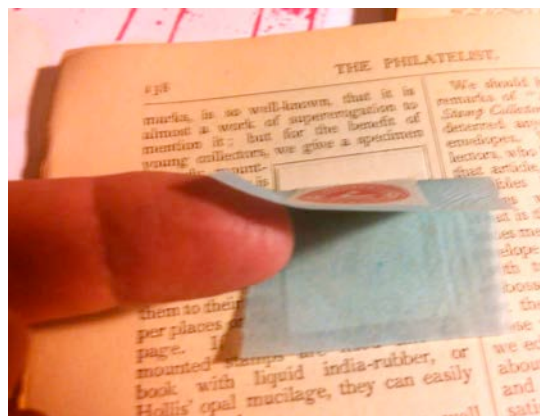
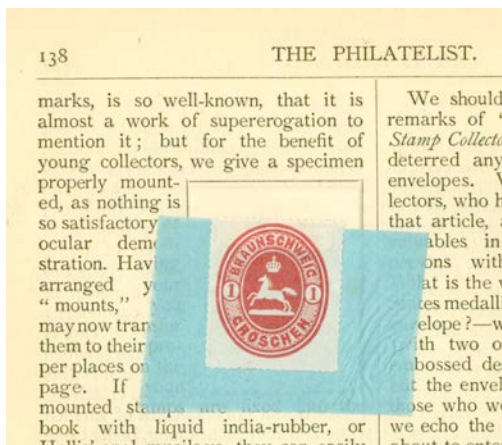
### On Permanent Albums, and the Mounting of Envelopes

“... We are decidedly against printed albums, as a permanent one is an impossibility; unless we have a work constructed like a traveller’s sample case, with strong handles, and keep two boys, or a wheelbarrow, to help to bring it before our friends.

Where should we be with a thousand pages in a hundred years time? The chances are they would be quite full, and we should be as far from permanency as ever. Like the elderly couple who, being informed that ravens lived for a century, bought one to see, we advise our readers to test the album in question for themselves.”

### As to mounting stamps in an album, before gummed hinges were invented:

“The correct way of mounting adhesives, so as to show their watermarks is so well-known, that it is almost a work of supererogation to mention it; but for the benefit of young collectors, we give a specimen properly mounted, as nothing is so satisfactory as ocular demonstration. Having arranged your “mounts,” you may now transfer them to their proper places on the page. If your mounted stamps are fixed into the book with liquid india-rubber, or Hollis’ opal mucilage, they can easily be removed.”

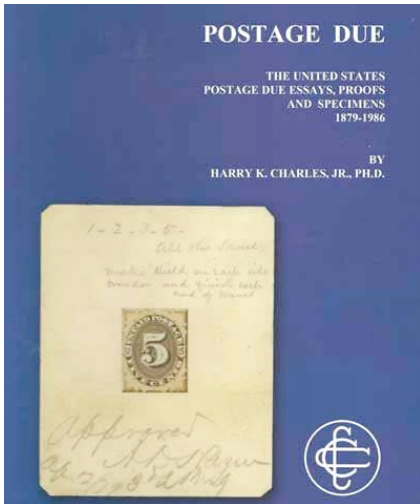


Philatelic historians will enjoy paging through these small publications (carefully) and may even give the regular puzzlers a try. They make our Stumper look like a stroll in the park.

# # #

## New on our Shelves

*The following resources have been added to our collection:*



### Books

Boone, Lalia, **Idaho Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary**, University of Idaho Press, Moscow, 1988

Charles, Harry K., **Postage Due: The United States Postage Due Essays, Proofs, and Specimens, 1879-1986**, Collectors Club of Chicago, 2013

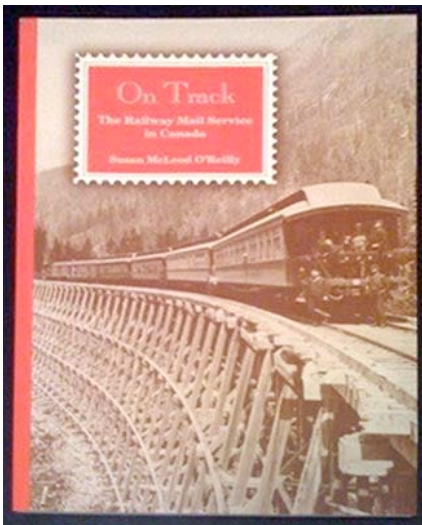
Crossby, P.A., Editor, **Lovell's Gazetteer of British North America**, John Lovell & Son, Montreal, 1881

Morgan, Helen, **Blue Mauritius: The Hunt for**

**the World's Most Valuable Stamps**, Atlantic Books, London, 2009

Maassen, Wolfgang and Vincent Schouberechts, **Milestones of the Philatelic Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**, le Musee des Timbres et des Monnaies de Monaco, Monaco, 2013

O'Reilly, Susan McLeod, **On Track: the Railway Mail Service in Canada**, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec, 1992

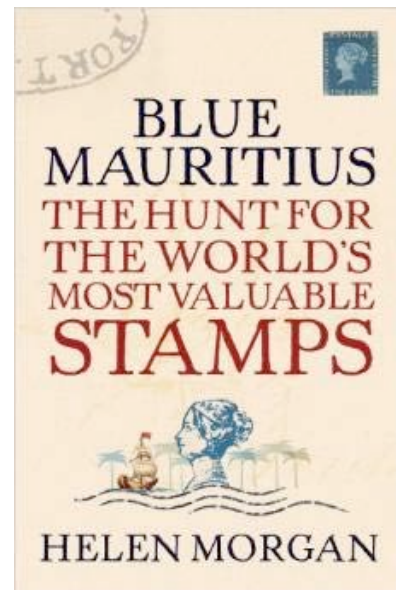


Porter, Adrian, **The Life and Letters of Sir John Henniker Heaton**, Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh, 1916

Smith, A. D., **The Development of Rates of Postage: An Historical and Analytical Study**, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1917

Urbanek, Mae, **Wyoming Place Names**, Mountain Press Publishing, Missoula, 1988

Watson, James, **Stamps and Aircraft**, Faber and Faber Limited, 1961



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## **Library Notes**

**Orlie Trier, NPL President**

### **Special Thanks**

Greg Alexander has been an integral member of our library, serving on the Board for 10 years. We are sorry to see him go but he is in the process of moving to Pendleton to be with his wife, Wynn, now working there for the Forest Service. Greg has been our technical support person and *Book Reports* editor; he will continue to manage our website remotely. We wish them well and look forward to seeing Greg drop by the clubhouse whenever he's in Portland.

### **Service Opportunity**

With Greg's departure we are in need of a new *Book Reports* editor. This work could be divided between two different people. Anyone interested, please give me a call, or if you know of somebody who might be interested let me know and I will contact them. Please give this some thought, as all of us together know more people than I as an individual.

## **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.

<b>Don Averill</b>	<b>Susan MacKinnon</b>
<b>Michael Dixon</b>	<b>Jo Senters</b>
<b>Jack Kelly</b>	<b>Johnny Reaser</b>
<b>Laura Crawshaw</b>	<b>Elizabeth Vandeley</b>

*THANK YOU all for your support!*

### **Northwest Philatelic Library, Inc.**

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