

San Jose Stamp Club

APS Chapter 0264-025791

Founded 1927, Club show since 1928

December 2019

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the San Jose Stamp
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From a Bad Start to a Good Ending

As the title implies, the club started the year having to deal with bad press surrounding our annual show. We began the year dealing with this bad press instead of planning our show. By the time we started putting a team together for Filatellic Fiesta, bourse had already been affected. The result being we were down 2-4 dealers this year. But we persevered and in the end we had a successful show. Club sales, the auction and the raffle all went well. Not everything was perfect but those things that were not quite right were minor. All of it will get corrected as we continue to look for ways to improve the show. The success of Filatellic Fiesta is a testimony to the great teamwork by those involved with the production of the show. Great things can happen when a dedicated team works together.

We have a new challenge for 2020 since we are moving the show back to the fairgrounds. We will have more room which is great. We can add dealers. We can also combine hospitality and club sales which means we can cover both areas with fewer people. This has been a problem at the Elks Lodge. There may be some problems getting dealers to come who dislike the fairgrounds, but with the improvements being made and a good sales effort I think things will be all right. We still have to determine where to have the banquet. All these challenges are not problems, but opportunities from which we can produce a better show. Now, more than ever, we need to come together as a club and get the team for the 2020 show going early. We need to start in January. That way we can maximize our chances for a full bourse and get a better handle on exhibits and awards. Most club members were at Filatellic Fiesta. Let's think outside the box and come up with new innovations/improvements for the 2020 show.

At the first club meeting in November there were a lot of good ideas put forth by club members on how to improve the meetings. The key item discussed was more time spent actually dealing with stamps. This included members bringing items from their collections to share and discuss as well as bringing donations to the club meetings for the members to review. I also think a better effort in the presentation area would be beneficial. I actually like producing the PowerPoint presentations I give. All I need is a topic and I'm good to go. I'm going to make the effort to do more for 2020. Anybody else willing to step up?

Don't forget the Christmas Dinner with the SJPC on December 11. I received an email from Shav, President of the SJPC on November 9. The schedule is as follows, Setup to start at 6:30, to be completed by 6:45. Dinner starts at 7:00. After dinner there will be a speaker, Michael Brookman, to discuss how he turned his passion for collecting local scenic views and history into a series of books. He also requested that we contact him as soon as possible with a head count and what people plan to bring to the dinner. The categories are Appetizers/Chips and Dip, Salad, Main Dish, Side Dish/Vegetables, Drinks, Bread/Rolls, Desserts. The sooner we get the information to Shav the better. Let Brian know as soon as possible.

2019 may have started bad but I think it ended well. As a club we can be proud of those things we accomplished. I'm looking forward to 2020 and all the good things that can happen. In closing, December is the time for family so I wish everyone a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**.

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Club Blog & Website

Blog Updates

No Activity

Website Updates

Minutes of the 11/06/19 club meeting uploaded
Filatellic Fiesta Photos uploaded
Minutes of the 10/16/19 club meeting uploaded
November 2019 Newsletter uploaded

Remember the dates!

Dec 4	San Jose Stamp Club Meeting
Dec 7-8	PENPEX
Dec 11	SJSC/SJPC Christmas Dinner

President's Message

WE did it! After being written off at the beginning of the year, the club rallied and made Filatellic Fiesta 2019 a big success! We accomplished this with teamwork and supporting each other. Everyone who contributed can be proud of our accomplishment. Attendance was down slightly but not significantly. The raffle for the US #1 sold over \$300 in tickets; the club sales area generated \$1000 and the auction generated just over \$1000. The balance sheet isn't settled yet but it appears we generated a modest profit.

Fiesta 2020 is planned for November after a lively debate on possibly moving it. We are moving to the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds due to the remodel going on at the Elk's Lodge. It has a higher cost structure, so we'll need to find ways to cut costs and raise new revenue.

A key to success going forward is growing both the club and show committee. To grow the club, I'm suggesting that we get out and make presentations to senior centers, service clubs, and ethnic social organizations. If we can find an effective presentation to each group, I believe we will get people interested in joining our club. I'm challenging everyone to think about what event you can help us get into.

When people (both existing and new) come to meetings, we should have more stamps at the meetings. This can be done in two ways: club members bring part of their collection and share it with the club; secondly, I'll start bringing donations to meetings for members to review for their own purchase or prepare it for the club inventory.

If we make this effort, I believe we can grow our club. Another thing to work on is how to get people who are on our mailing list as known stamp collectors to get involved. Please bring your ideas forward.

Growth will inject some new life and energy into our meetings and give us the opportunity to do more. This is especially important for Fiesta 2020 as the core team members did a LOT and we were still missing some key positions. A show committee that is twice as big will give us the manpower to not overwhelm anyone and keep the fun in doing our respective assignments.

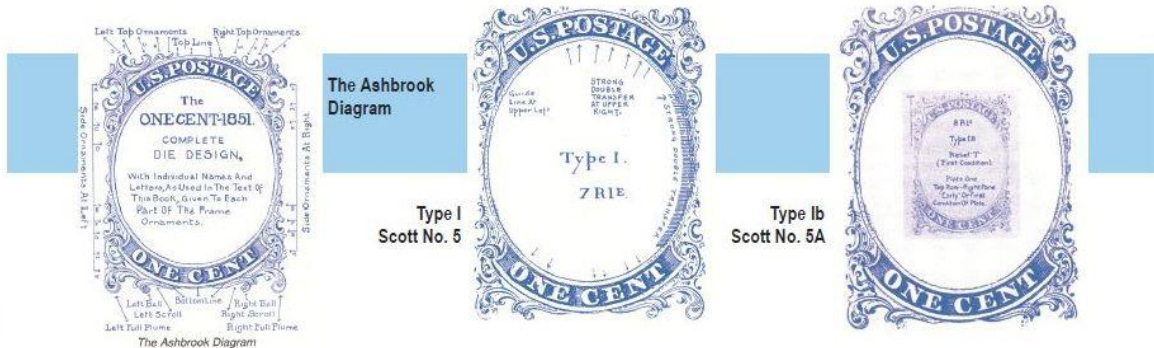
To summarize, FF'19 was a success, FF'20 will be at the Fairgrounds and we need volunteers to spread out the workload. We hope to do this by growing the club. I hope we can count on everyone contributing.

Brian

The United States 1851 One Cent Blue By Andrew Levitt



In my early years in professional philately, while progressing from the mail room of the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries to describer, auctioneer, and vice president, I can remember the great philatelists of that era coming to study and bid on the important United States 1851 One Cent Blue pieces. At the historic Newbury Auctions in the early 1960s, collectors such as Morrison Waud and Mort Neinken vied with great dealers like Ezra Cole and Raymond Weill. The competition was fierce, realizations at multiples of catalog were the rule, and the great pieces—just as they do today—went at prices that we all found hard to imagine.



The enthusiasm those great philatelists displayed for the One Cent Blue was contagious, and as my career path took me to the presidency of the Sotheby Parke-Bernet Stamp Auction Company, I was privileged to offer the fabulous One Cent 1851-57 Collection of Ryohei Ishikawa. And yet, even as he sold the major portion of this outstanding study of the subject, Mr. Ishikawa retained a handful of pieces, including the 7R1E and 99R2 covers, for his outstanding U.S. Classic Grand Prix Exhibit. The 7R 1 E and 99R2 covers, which Ryohei Ishikawa regarded as the keystones to his collection, subsequently were acquired by John R. Boker, Jr. As my own philatelic career is so closely intertwined with the greatest examples of the United States 1851 One Cent Blue, it gives me great pleasure to present this Study of that issue and to illustrate these covers on behalf of the late Mr. Boker.

Providing collectors with the romance and intrigue of an early Classic issue in all its varieties, the United States 1851 One Cent Blue has been, and continues to be, the centerpiece for some of the greatest and most valuable collections ever formed. Research and plating work on the One Cent Blue is most closely associated with Stanley B. Ashbrook.

His landmark work, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851-1857*, was described by no less an authority than Lester G. Brookman as “the greatest philatelic study ever made.” The famous “Ashbrook Diagram” seen above illustrates and identifies all of the major characteristics of the 1851 One Cent Blue Issue.

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In his book, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851 to 1861*, Mortimer L. Neinken expanded on the plating work done by Ashbrook. Even though the One Cent Blue is one of the most widely collected and studied of all issues, the outstanding philatelists of our own time continue to research this issue for additional plate varieties and to pursue the One Cent Blue rarities as the basis for their own outstanding collections.

A collector seeking an avenue for specialization would be hard pressed to select a better subject. The 1851 One Cent Blue encompasses all aspects of philately. Issued primarily to pay the required postage on unsealed printed circulars, it also found service by itself on drop letters (mail dropped off at a post office and picked up by the addressee at that some location), as payment for postage on newspapers, and as a carrier fee. In addition to its own distinct usages, it also can be collected in a myriad of combination usages with other issues.

Nowhere is the wonderful collecting challenge offered by the One Cent Blue better manifested than in a study of its design varieties. Starting from one stunningly beautiful design that is a masterpiece of the engraver's art, a total of five printing plates (counting the early and late stages of Plate 1 as separate plates), with 200 positions to each plate, produced a total of 1,000 positions for the imperforate One Cent stamp. In the remainder of this Study of the 1851 One Cent Blue Imperforate Issue, we will attempt to summarize the results of the plating work of Stanley B. Ashbrook and Mortimer Neinken, drawing upon the writings of those philatelists as well as the later work of Jerome S. Wagshal in his Philatelic Foundation Analysis Leaflet, *The One Cent Stamp of 1851 and 1857*.

As they came off the early printing presses, each of the 1,000 plate positions of the 1851 One Cent Blue held within its printed design tiny variations, or plate varieties. It is truly remarkable---indeed almost incomprehensible that from all of those 1,000 positions, only one furnished us with a complete design. As Jerome Wagshal explains in his Analysis Leaflet: "The reason that the One Cent stamp was produced with so many variations in its design was that the design was too large overall for the plate size limitations inherent in the manufacturing process. As a result, various outer portions of the design---at top and/or at bottom had to be trimmed away to allow 200 impressions of the design to fit on a plate ." Another contributing factor to the multiplicity of types is the elaborate, baroque character of the design, which incorporated many separately identifiable components at its borders. Thus, when the trimming at the borders occurred, the deletion of separate design elements could be identified, rather than (would have been the case, for example, if the change had involved) merely a shortening of a uniform border area."

As noted, the printing plates used for all of the 1851 One Cent stamps consisted of 200 positions to a plate. The sheets of 200 stamps that came off the presses were cut into separate (left/right) panes of 100 each before being issued. For each pane of stamps, therefore, we have 100 positions, identified as 1 through 100, running from left to right and top to bottom so that the upper left stamp on a pane is position 1, the upper right stamp is position 10, and the lower right stamp is position 100.

With this as the basis for the standard identification system, the 1851 One Cent stamps are first identified by the plate position (1 through 100), the left (L) or right (R) pane, and the printing plate used (Plate IE, or early, Plate 1L, or late, and Plates 2,3, and 4). Using this identification system, we then progress to the study of each plate position and its classification by design type. For the imperforate One Cent Blue stamp, the Scott Catalogue lists eight major numbers, as follows:

Scott #5 Type I Design, #5A Type Ib, #6 Type Ia, #6b Type Ic, #7 Type II, #8 Type III, #8A Type IIIa, #9 Type IV

Type I, Scott 5

As might be expected, the complete design is classified as Type I. The only plate position on which this complete design is found is position 7R 1 E, the 7th stamp from the left across the top row of the right pane of plate 1 in its early state. This is the rarest and most valuable of the imperforate One Cent Blue stamps. It is seen in the cover on the top of the previous page as the left stamp in the strip of three. Its defining characteristics are shown in the middle illustration of the previous page.

In the Type I design all of the ornaments are complete on all four sides. Further, the top and bottom lines also are complete. Of all the imperforate 1851 One Cent Blue stamps that were printed, the only examples that show the complete design as found on the original die are those few great rarities that come down to us today from this one position, Type I, position 7R1E, Scott #5.

In describing the 7R 1 E cover illustrated here, Ashbrook stated, "This item, in my opinion, ranks as number one in the list of the rarest covers containing stamps of the General Issues of the United States. Here we have everything that could possibly be desired in a rare cover...I have no apologies to offer for my enthusiasm over this gem..."

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Type Ib, Scott 5A

The Type Ib design is the next closest type to the complete Type I design. In fact, the plate position of Type Ib stamps also was in close proximity to the Type I stamp.

Type Ib stamps all come from the same top row as the 7R 1 E stamp. They are positions 3-6 and 8-9R 1 E. In all instances, Type Ib stamps show the complete design characteristics as Type I at the top of the stamp. However, to varying degrees, depending on the plate position, a portion of the bottom ornaments is missing. Note, for example in our illustration of position 8R 1 E to the left (generally regarded as the most complete of the Type Ib positions) that the bottom of the right plume is missing—a result of burnishing, or erasure, of the extreme bottom portion of the design after its entry on the plate. (Adding to the magnificence of the 7RIE cover pictured on the previous page is the presence of two Type Ib stamps, positions 8 and 9RIE.)

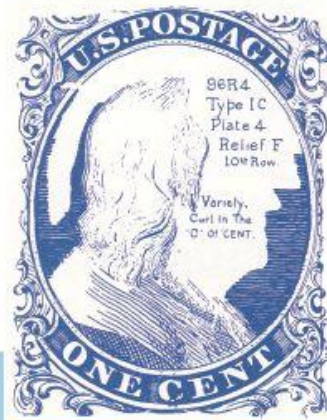
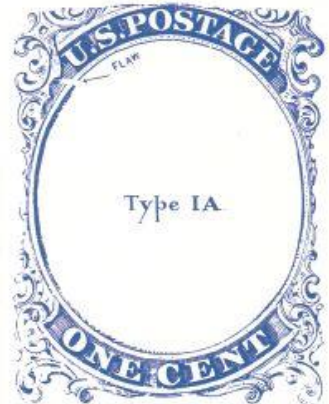
In discussing the identifying characteristics of Type Ib, Neinken adds, “As they are all from the top row, most copies will show part of the top sheet margin, if they are not cut too close. Different types from the interior portion of many of the plates show a blur of color just above the stamp, and hence if a design is complete, or more or less complete at the top, this blur prevents the design from standing out in relief against the clear background. Top row stamps generally show a clear background above the design. This is a characteristic of the Type Ib.”

In describing the appeal of the cover reproduced above, John R. Boker, Jr., explained “The stamps are plate positions 1-3R 1 E. The stamps were issued on July 1, 1851, and this cover bears an early, July 4, 1851, postmark date. What we have here, then, is an envelope that carried the first One Cent Blue stamps, from one of the very first sheets to come off the printing press.”

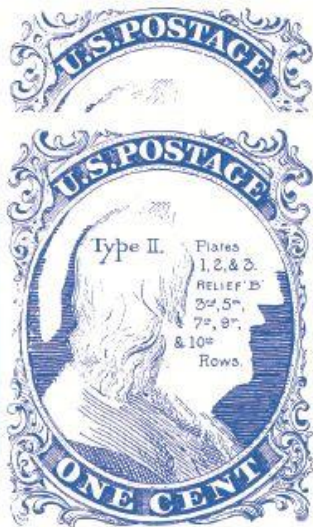


Positions 1-3R 1E, upper left sheet corner margin strip of three, Type II, 1I, Ib (Scott 7, 7, 5A). The finest of the three known covers with this combination. From the John R. Boker, Jr., Collection. Ex-Knapp, Jeffreys,

Type Ia
Scott No. 6



Type Ic,
Scott No. 6b



Type II,
Scott No. 7

Ashbrook stated, “This item, in my opinion, ranks as number one in the list of the rarest covers containing stamps of the General Issues of the United States. Here we have everything that could possibly be desired in a rare cover...I have no apologies to offer for my enthusiasm over this gem...”

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Type Ia, Scott 6

The Type Ia design is the converse of Type Ib, showing full bottom ornaments and substantially reduced top ornaments. Just as the complete top designs (Type Ib) come only from a top row, the Type Ia stamps, with their complete bottom design, come only from 18 of the 20 positions on a bottom row, in this instance the bottom row of Plate 4. That plate came into use in early 1857, just before the introduction of perforations. It was used primarily in the production of perforated stamps; thus, imperforate Type Ia stamps rank second highest in value among all the One Cent Blue imperforate types (the only exception being one Type III position, to be discussed later in this study).

Type Ic, Scott 6b

In 1993, the Scott Specialized Catalogue editors added what One Cent specialists had recognized for decades, the Type Ic. The two best (and most valuable) Type Ic examples come from the two bottom row positions of Plate 4 that are not Type Ia (positions 91 and 96R4). They show the complete ornaments of Type Ia, except that the lower right plumes are partially erased. Approximately eight other examples of Type Ic come from two internal rows of Plate 4. They resemble Type IIIa stamps (on which the bottom ornaments are incomplete) except that the lower left plumes are complete, leaving the lower right plumes incomplete and therefore consistent with Type Ic characteristics.

Type II, Scott 7

Brookman, in *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century*, describes the distinguishing characteristics of this Type as follows: "...the top line is always complete, the top ornaments may be complete or they may be partially cut away, the bottom line is always complete, and the little balls of the bottom scrolls and the bottom of the lower plume ornaments are missing." But there is much more to the Type II design, and Wagshal amplifies on Brookman: "...on most Type II positions the top ornaments are partially erased, but on a few Type II positions, specifically those from the top row of Plate 4...the top ornaments are complete. Specialists prize these positions above ordinary Type II positions. Also, Type II stamps from the rare Plate 3 often have an exceptionally deep, rich color, and a number of Plate 3 positions show fine crack lines. These, too, are more highly valued than the ordinary Type II stamps. Finally, although Plate 1 Late produced recut (Type IV) stamps from 199 of its 200 positions, one position—4R 1 L—was not recut: this is a Type II (altered from Type Ib in the early state of the Plate) which has a distinctive double transfer and is worth much more than an ordinary Type II." To show the range that may exist within this type, in our Type II illustration, we herewith reproduce the design for those positions that show almost complete top ornaments. Above that design we also present the top portion of Type II positions on which the top ornaments are more reduced.



Type III,
Scott No. 8

Type III,
Scott No. 8
Position
99R2



The Finest Example of the 1851 One Cent Blue, Type III, Position 99R2 (Scott 8). From the John R. Boker, Jr., Collection of Outstanding One Cent 1851 Issue Usages. Ex-Newbury, Ishikawa.

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Type III, Scott 8

On this type, both the top and the bottom lines are broken. In addition, the top and bottom ornaments are always incomplete. Within this definition, because the line breaks at top and at bottom are the key distinguishing characteristics for Type III stamps, the degree to which both lines are broken is an important value determinant. The Scott Catalogue definition of Type III specifies that the breaks at top and bottom must be at least 2mm wide. Neinken classifies a stamp with a very small break at top and bottom as a “poor” example of Type III; a stamp with a wide break in the top line, “extending from a point directly under the ornament (point V on the Ashbrook diagram for Type I) to a point above the top of the ‘A’ of ‘POSTAGE’”, but with the bottom line only slightly broken” as a fair example; and a stamp which shows a wide break for both lines as a “fine” example of Type III.

Type III, Scott 8, Position 99R2

While classified as a Type III stamp, Wagshal properly points out, “...99R2 occupies a unique and important position within the One Cent classification system. Though lacking a separate number, it is given a specially paragraphed listing in the Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue as if it were a separate catalog number in itself. It is the second most valuable imperforate type variety (next to 7RIE, Type I)...”

Ashbrook also speaks glowingly of the 99R2 stamp and goes on to describe the 99R2 cover illustrated above as follows:

“This is the finest cover I have ever seen showing use of this rare stamp. This copy of the 99R2 is an early printing, a marvelous engraving, a beautiful deep blue color, In addition the stamp has the full sheet margin at bottom with a boardwalk around the other three sides, and to top all, it is neatly tied by a brilliant red ‘New York Carrier’ marking. It certainly is a cover that leaves nothing to be desired. It ranks high in the list of the finest U.S. covers known.”

Type IIIa, Scott 8A

The standard definition for Type IIIa is that, while on Type III stamps both the top and bottom lines are broken, on Type IIIa, either (but not both) the top or the bottom lines are broken. As with the Type III stamps, the wider the break, the greater the value. The standard definition for Type IIIa is that either the top or the bottom line may be broken; but almost all Type IIIa stamps show a broken top line. Thus, as the Scott catalogue points out, “Stamps of Type IIIa with bottom line broken command higher prices than those with top line broken.”

In advising clients who wish to build significant collections of the One Cent Blue 1851 Issue, we concur with the advice given by Lester G. Brookman: “in showing examples of this type in a specialized collection, it is well to show both varieties.”

Type IV, Scott 9

Wagshal explains why this is the most common imperforate One Cent stamp:

“When Plate 1 was reworked from its early to its late state.. almost all positions needed to be strengthened. Accordingly, 199 of the 200 positions on Plate 1 in its late state had some recutting at either top or bottom or both. Any recutting, in whatever degree, qualifies a stamp as Type IV. Since Plate 1 Late was used more than any other plate for imperforate One Cent production, Scott #9 is the most common imperforate One Cent stamp.

End of “1851 One Cent Blue”

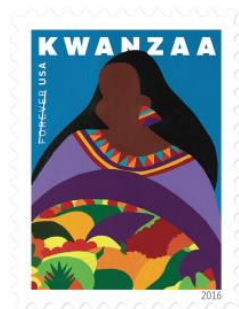
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Christmas Season Stamps - 2019



+++ Dues Time +++

It's that time of year again for your annual club dues. Please pay them in a timely manner so the treasurer doesn't have to harass you for months on end for you to pay them. Thanks

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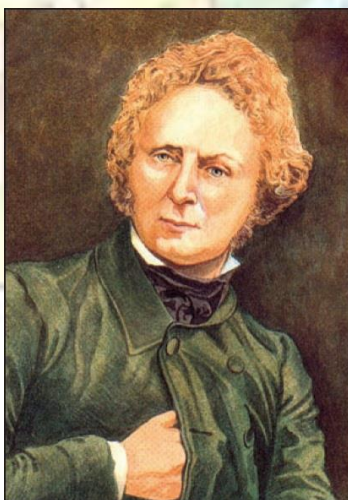
December 2019

The First Christmas Card



With the exchange of Christmas cards being such a routine feature of the holiday season, many people are unaware that the first Christmas card was produced in Great Britain only in 1843, the year that also saw the publication of Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*. Prior to the introduction of the penny post in 1840, Christmas greetings exchanged through the mail were handwritten seasonal messages included on calling cards or in folded letters.

Christmas celebrations flourished in England in the 1840s, and many German traditions, such as Christmas trees, were popularized by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband. And it was an associate of Prince Albert's, Henry Cole (1808-1882), who was too busy - or perhaps found it too much of an imposition - to write long personal Christmas greetings to his numerous friends and relations, who produced the first Christmas card.



The name Henry Cole should sound familiar to philatelists. He was a strong supporter of Rowland Hill, and from 1837 to 1840 acted as his assistant, playing a key role in the introduction of the penny post. In fact, he is sometimes credited with selecting the design of the world's first postage stamp, the Penny Black.

Cole also was the manager of the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations;" held in 1851. Popularly known as the Crystal Palace Exhibition, the five-month event was enormously popular and a financial success. It is estimated that as much as a third of the population of Great Britain traveled to London to visit the exhibition.

Among other things, the Great Exhibition was the impetus for the development of the Department of Science and Art at South Kensington Museum in the 1850s (renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899), of which Henry Cole became the first director. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1875.

Cole employed the services of a personal friend, the London artist John Calcott Horsley (1817-1895), to create his 1843 greeting card. Horsley's illustration was a triptych design, with a center piece and two side panels. The center, full-color image shows a family raising their glasses in a toast around a Christmas feast, while the side panels illustrate feeding and clothing the poor.

The ancient Christmas symbols of holly and ivy are used throughout the design. There is a space at the top for the name of the recipient, and a line at the bottom for the sender's name, with A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You printed in a hanging banner. Cole printed 1,000 cards and, after having used as many as he needed, he sold the remainder at 6d (sixpence) each, now the equivalent of about \$4. These were advertised in the *Athenaeum* paper:

Just published. A Christmas Congratulation Card: or picture emblematical of the Old English Festivity to Perpetuate kind recollections between Dear Friends.

Although the original card was criticized by temperance groups because it pictured a family, and in particular a young girl, sipping wine, the concept of exchanging Christmas greeting cards soon became very popular.

Continued on next page

First Christmas Card continued...

The London printers Charles Goodall & Sons were the first to mass-produce Christmas cards in 1862. (Incidentally, Goodall & Sons produced most of the playing cards used in Great Britain at that time.)

With the introduction of halfpenny stamps in 1870 for the printed matter rate, the popularity of Christmas cards soared. By 1880 more than 11.5 million cards were being sent each year. Over the course of time, popular themes expanded to include decorated Christmas trees, winter scenes, throwing snowballs, tobogganing, and robin redbreasts, as well as the traditional Father Christmas and religious images.



Holiday greetings cards were imported from England to the United States until 1875, when Louis Prang, a German immigrant living in Roxbury, Boston, started publishing high-quality Christmas cards for the American market. Initially, his cards were unrelated to the Christmas scene and featured flowers and birds.

Prang was an experienced lithographer and produced color reproductions of oil paintings. For his Christmas cards, he used up to twenty colors. By the early 1880s he was producing more than 5 million cards each year, and began to include typical Christmas scenes, such as snow scenes, glowing fireplaces, children playing with toys, and fir trees.

An 1878 Prang card showing a cherub ringing a Christmas bell was used for one of the 1975 U.S. Christmas stamps — incidentally the centenary of Prang's first card. Prang is sometimes referred to as "The Father of the American Christmas card."



This article originally appeared in the December 2008 issue of The American Philatelist, pages 1104-1105.



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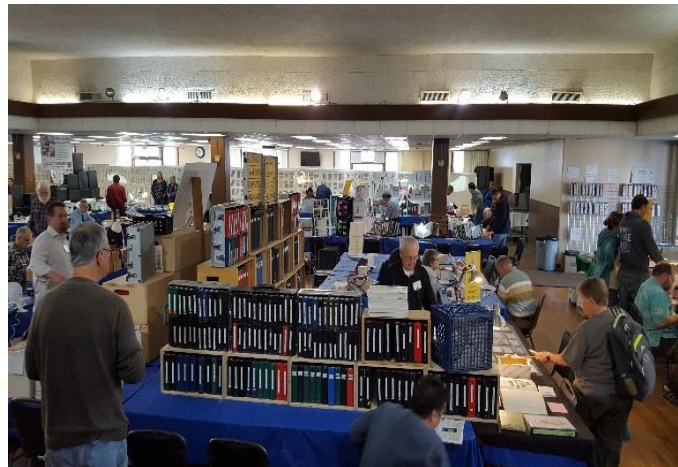
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Filatelic Fiesta 2019

Filatelic Fiesta 2019 was another successful show for the club. Attendance felt down but those that did attend were more enthusiastic. The auction, club sales and raffle were the best that I've seen since I have been a member of the club. We had 107 frames of exhibits which was more than enough for our WSP status. Ken Martin, APS Chief Membership Officer was at the show and hosted an APS Town Hall Meeting. The banquet was good with everyone attending in good spirits. We had several societies hold meetings at the show. We also had several excellent presentations by Kristin Patterson and Peter Adams from the Sequoia Stamp Club. The club can be proud of a job well done.



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Filatellic Fiesta continued...



APS Sparkplug Award

It was a tough decision this year with several people being very deserving of recognition. It was with great joy to announce that Andy Hilton is awarded the San Jose Stamp Club's APS Sparkplug Award. He answered the call to fill a challenging position, Bourse Chairman. He did a terrific job contacting every dealer as they all had heard the show was cancelled, so rebuilding bourse was especially challenging. Andy kept calm in difficult situations and remained professional. Great job Andy.



New Member

We hosted a raffle of a US #1 at Fiesta that was very generously donated by Jim Steinwinder. The winner is Homer Tang of Cupertino. I met with him and handed him his prize. I was very pleased to find that he plans to join the SJSC. Homer is a retired educator and is looking to get more involved with his long time hobby after it being static for years. He puts the "gentle" in gentleman and collects US and China. Please join me in welcoming Homer to the SJSC.



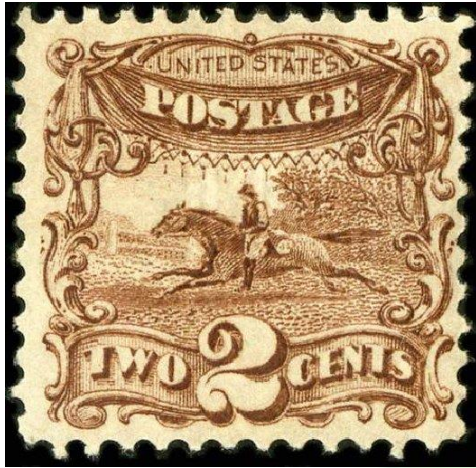
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America's 100 Greatest Stamps



#25 – Scott 113 1869 2 cent Post Horse & Rider



#24 – Scott 241 1893 1\$ Columbian



#23 – Scott 296 1901 4 cent Pan-American

Club Member/Dealers

Richard Clever

Asia Philatelics
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Christmas Shopping for Stamp Collectors

Shopping for a stamp collector can be very challenging for our family and friends. It is hoped that providing the following to looking to shop for philatelists will give them some help.

The natural place to start is the USPS. They publish gift guide that has some wonderful ephemera for collectors. The “Delivering Cheer” book nicely displays stamps and a nice array of covers, wall art, postal toys, jigsaw puzzles, calendars, Christmas decorations and other items. Go to:

<https://store.usps.com/store/results/gifts>

Another logical place to look is America’s largest stamp collecting retailer, Mystic Stamps. If you know anybody in the market for a US stamp album, their 3-volume American Heirloom album for \$60 is a good bargain. Mystic’s page of “Showcase Offers” has some interesting products.

<https://www.mysticstamp.com/Listing/All/Custom/Showcase-Offers/>

Every stamp collector I know also loves books, and a brief list of suggestions follows. Most of these can be ordered off the Barnes & Noble and Amazon web sites. The youth books listed below can be purchased at Hickelbee’s Books in Willow Glen.

A popular series of books for philatelists is Lawrence Block’s “Hit” series because the star of the book uses his income to purchase exotic stamps. Mr. Block was nice enough to sign some book plates for the benefit of the SJSC’s youth programs. If you’d like to turn a Block book into a signed edition, contact Brian Jones to purchase a plate for \$5.

Non-Fiction

Title	Author	Publisher / Date	List Price / ISBN
The One-Cent Magenta Inside the Quest to Own the Most Valuable Stamp in the World	James Barron	Algonquin Books 03/07/2017	\$23.95 9781616205188
How the Post Office Created America: A History	Winfield Gallagher	Penguin Publishing 06/28/2016	\$28.00 9781594205002
Neither Snow Nor Rain A History of the US Postal Service	Devin Leonard	Grove Atlantic 05/05/2016	\$26.00 9780802124586
Every Stamp Tells a Story	Cheryl Ganz	Smithsonian Institution Press 12/02/2014	\$29.95 9781935623427
A History of America in 36 Postage Stamps	Chris West	Picador 10/28/2014	\$28.00 9781250043689
An American History Album The Story of the US Told Through Stamps	Michael Worek	Firefly Books 09/25/2012	\$29.95 97817708551207

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Blue Mauritius: The Hunt For the World's Most Valuable Stamps	Helen Morgan	Atlantic Books 04/01/2009	\$16.95 9781843544364
Guide to Stamp Collecting	Janet Klug	Harper Perennial April 1, 2008	\$xx.xx 9780061341397
100 Greatest American Stamps	Janet Klug & Don Sundman	Whitman Publishing 10/30/2007	\$29.95 9780794822484
Happy Mail: Keep in touch with cool & Stylish Handmade Snail Mail!	Eunice Moyle, Sabrina Moyle, Alex Bronstad	Walter Foster Jr. September 12, 2017	\$14.95 9781633223677

Fiction

Title	Author	Publisher / Date	List Price / ISBN-13
Keller's Fedora	Lawrence Block	Subterranean Press May 2017	\$25.00
Hit Me	Lawrence Block	Mulholland Books February 12, 2013	\$26.99 9780316127356
Hit and Run	Lawrence Block	William Morrow June 24, 2008	\$24.95 9780060840907
Hit Parade	Lawrence Block	William Morrow July 3, 2006	\$24.95 9780060840884
Hit List	Lawrence Block	William Morrow October 24, 2000	\$24.95 9780060198336
Hit Man	Lawrence Block	William Morrow January 21, 1998	\$22.00 9780688141790
One Penny Orange Mystery	Morris Ackerman	CreateSpace Pub. 08/19/2011	\$14.80 9781461184669

Comments:

The One Cent Magenta: An excellent history of the 1c British Guiana focusing on each owner and how they contributed to the stamps legend. There is also a nice history of British Guiana and early postal history. Slight undertone of condescension towards stamp collectors as the book is written by a NY Times writer and not a collector.

How the Post Office Created America: The book is not only a history of the Post Office, but the cultural changes that resulted from it. The ability to communicate across a vast country was an engine for change. The Post Office was foundational institution and influenced a great many aspects of life in America. It is well researched written book and highly recommended.

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Neither Snow nor Rain: Follows the history and development of the USPS from Ben Franklin to modern times. It is more focused on the Postal Service than “How the Post Office Created America” with lots of stories about unusual things being put the mail. It

Every Stamp Tells A Story: Former (then current) curator of the National Postal Museum Cheryl Ganz tells the story of the gems of the Smithsonian

“Keller Series” by Lawrence Block: Jack Keller is a contract killer whose special talent is finding creative ways to complete his work so as to throw off suspicion. Included in Jack’s travels are stops at local retail stamp shops and auctions. He collects stamps from around the world and wants only high quality stamps for his collection. While books about murder are not typical for this reader, it is a LOT of fun to enjoy all the philatelic references. Also, with the creative ways Jack Keller completes his assignment,

Youth

Title	Author	Publisher / Date	List Price / ISBN-13
It Came in the Mail	Ben Clanton Age: 4 - 8	Simon & Schuster June 21, 2016	\$18.00 9781481403603
Special Delivery	Philip C. Stead	Roaring Brook Press March 0. 2015	\$17.99 9781596439313
Letters to Leo	Amy Hest Age: 8 – 12	Candlewick Press Reprint	\$6.99 9780763671655
Stanley the Mailman	William Bee Age: 4 – 7	Peachtree Publishers March 1, 2016	\$14.95 9781561458677
Herman’s Letter	Tom Percival Age: 3 – 6	Bloomsbury USA November 11, 2014	\$17.99 9781619634237
The Jolly Christmas Postman	Allan & Janet Ahlberg Age: 5 – 8	Penguin UK October 28, 2014	\$20.09 9780141340111