



# The Overprint

Newsletter of the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club  
Stan Raugh, Editor  
4217 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Temple, PA 19560  
(610) 921-5822

Issue: September 2014

Most meetings held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
Meeting site is Berkshire Commons, 5485 Perkiomen Avenue (Route 422)  
Turn north on Lincoln opposite the Dairy Queen.  
Proceed 300 feet, turn left on Washington and look right of center at the stop sign.

**Tuesday, September 2, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.**

**My Favorite Stamp, Set or Album Page**

**By You!**

**Yes, you will be the star! Bring your favorite stamp, stamp set, or page and tell us about how that beauty became the jewel of your collection!**

**Available for rental, free of charge to members are the club's hot dog maker, small coffee maker and microwave. The go to guy here is club President Pete Baney. His phone number is (610) 926-4372. These items are also available to non-members for a rental fee.**

**The August attendance drawing of \$5.00 was won by Dr. Robert A. Denby. The 50/50 drawing was won by Ken Bleiler and amounted to \$23.00. Attendance was good for Paul Peterson's program on World War I. Our October program will be an auction.**

## ***New book encyclopedia of Civil War stamp envelopes***

Many stamp collectors are unaware that "stamp envelopes" exist and therefore have no idea what they are.

Your editor has only a vague notion of them and when a review of a book about these Civil War relics was printed in a recent copy of the journal of the U. S. Philatelic Classics Society I had to read the title a few times to jog my memory about what a stamp envelope is.

I'll explain what a stamp envelope is in a minute, but first let's review a bit about the economic conditions that existed during the American Civil War.

It happened that there was a crucial shortage of "hard" money (coinage) particularly in the early part of the war. Americans hoarded gold, silver and even copper-nickel coins--making change in transactions was a bear.

Some merchants ordered "cents" similar to circulating pennies. With designs that often mimicked circulating "Indian Head" cents in design and size, these coins were issued with patriotic themes. Some coins included advertising for the business and were called "Store Cards" although they were in reality copper alloy coins.

Other entrepreneurs encased stamps in a miniature brass frame with a mica cover to be used to make change. A three cent stamp in such a holder acted as a three-cent coin. These also contained advertising.

Some folks just passed around stamps as change, but the constant handling soon made the stamps unusable.

And thus, stamp envelopes were born. Printers created small envelopes to hold mint stamps. An amount was printed on the envelope and that total value in stamps was to be contained inside.

A quick look into the envelope and a merchant or customer could be sure they were receiving the correct amount.

The envelopes ran from plain to interesting to attractive. Some designs included the name of the printer and many were embellished with advertising promoting the name of the merchant who provided these stamp envelopes for their customers.

The book, *Civil War Stamp Envelopes*, by Fred L. Reed III, is 672 pages in length. It lists 514 varieties from 128 printers as well as what stores ordered the envelopes and what advertising was printed on them.

Some of the printers listed also produced Civil War Patriotic Envelopes and the in-depth biographical information for these issuers is often available in no other reference work.

I found it most interesting that one of the companies that made stamp envelopes was American Express.

The book is printed on high-quality stock and sells for \$79.95 hardback and twenty dollars less in paperback. Add \$10 for shipping and order from the author at Department C, Box 118162, Carrollton, TX 75011-8162.

And just when you think you know it all, another large field of collecting shows up!

---

---

Let it be known that you can list stamps for sale in *The Overprint*. Ads that are generalized are best, such as "A collection 80% complete of Russian stamps 1990 to 2005 in mostly mint condition for XYZ dollars, call." This is mostly a member to member service although a member could act on behalf of a friend, neighbor, etc. A 10% commission would go to the club.