

Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club Newsletter

April, 2020

This month's meeting of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club, which was scheduled for April 21 at 6:30 PM at the Lebanon Community Library, will not occur, due to the current public health emergency surrounding COVID-19, commonly known as the Corona Virus. With other April activities, including the big LANCOPEX show hosted by the PSLC which was scheduled for April 24 and 25 already being cancelled, it is assumed that it will not yet be safe for us all to convene this month.

***The American Philatelist* is online and available to all**

Most of us are members of the American Philatelic Society, but in case anyone reading this isn't, I just learned that the online version of their monthly magazine, *The American Philatelist*, has been made available to non-members. As you are looking around in cyberspace for things to read, check out the APS website, where you will be able to access the current and back issues of stamp collecting's most widely circulated journal.

The March meeting of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club was cancelled . . .

For the benefit of those who may be reading this long after the current crisis has subsided, it was cancelled due to the outbreak of COVID-19. We were all at home enjoying our families, our hobbies, and passing the time trying to keep ourselves and our loved ones well.

Using the Internet to augment your expertise

The March edition of *The American Philatelist* included an aside on page 230-31 about using free (or nearly free) online resources for research. Indeed, the World Wide Web has made information available that we once might have needed to leave our homes to access. From stamp collector forums to specialized websites, online philatelic libraries and everything in between, the Internet is bustling with many choice morsels of knowledge ripe for the picking.

My favorite areas of collecting specialization are the stamps of pre-1950 Germany and the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. I've found that the most fun and interesting aspect of collecting these countries lies in the ink left behind by the postman's cancelling device. To me, a stamp that tells where it's been or when it was there is worth keeping, even if some of the story was lost with the envelope it was soaked from. Austria-Hungary

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is especially fun to collect this way, because the locales that were once under its dominion are now found in several modern countries. This is a short report about how I use the Internet along with the clues left on the stamp to look for that lost information.

I am far from an expert on European history, and know very little about Old World geography. But the Internet has provided me with tools that have proven to be very useful indeed. My virtual specialist for German stamps is the Meyers Gazetteer www.myersgaz.org. It is a searchable database that I have bookmarked in my browser and on my phone. There, I can search for that postmark I just pulled from a pile of scraps. One of its most useful features is the “wild card” search, which is a way to search for a town even if only some of the mark is still there. The wild card search is executed by using an asterisk; a search for “*berg” or “*dorf” is not very helpful due to the large number of results it brings back, but a search of a less common combination of letters might yield a manageable number of results I can use to determine a match with a high degree of confidence. Pinning down the exact location of a town is another matter entirely, as some place names in Germany are very common; but the

gazetteer will list them all there for you.

I normally rely on a simple Google search to look up cancels on Austrian stamps (and there have been a few instances when it was more helpful than the Meyers Gazetteer in determining the cancel on a German stamp). For a stamp with a clear, complete cancel, typing it into Google will usually direct you to the Wikipedia page for the modern location, even if the spelling on the cancel is archaic, foreign, or otherwise not found on a world atlas produced for English speakers. A century-old Austrian stamp I searched for had the bottom half of the cancel with only the name “Mariahilf”; a search returned a district with that name in modern Vienna.

For partial cancels, it’s more of a trial and error experience to use Google (or the search engine of your choice). And sometimes, the place in question simply isn’t there anymore. I once researched a “St. Johannesburg” cancel on an Austrian stamp, and even coupling it with “Austria” returns irrelevant results centered on the more well-known Johannesburg in South Africa. Before giving up, I checked the images tab of the search, and there I found an image of an antique map with this location (it is interesting to note that as I was writing this, I

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couldn't replicate the results of that search; the map no longer turns up, and it is almost like the place never existed!)

I've found that identifying cancels on stamps gets easier with experience, and sometimes it's fun and useful to pull out an old-fashioned atlas to scour for the locations that my stamps have been. But I'm thankful for the tremendous data processing power of modern computing, just as I am sure that crossword puzzle aficionados increasingly rely on their smartphones instead of their dictionaries. In many cases, I would not have been able to identify the partial town cancel on my stamp without it.

Event Calendar

Due to the extremely fluid nature of our current situation, and the uncertainty over how long we will need to practice social distancing in order to keep each other safe, we will suspend the event calendar for the month.

Philatelic Chatter #2

By Dick Colberg

March 16, 2020

Time to look at more stamp investment advice from Charles J. Phillips, circa 1923.

British Guiana

"This is one of the great philatelic countries of the world, but

only a rich man can collect it in its entirety. For those who can afford it, nothing better in American stamps can be obtained. I can recommend to those of moderate means to collect the issues of 1853-59, 1860, 1860-62, and 1860-75. Stamps of Types A-3, A-5, and A-12 (Stanley Gibbons, ed.) are of great interest. Many points in them have to be cleared up; there are many varieties of color, paper, type, and perforation, and the whole forms a charming group worth much more attention than it has received in the United States, although it is largely collected in Great Britain. Such a collection would always meet with a ready sale."

It should be noted here that the one cent magenta of 1856 was sold in 1922 for \$32,500, a year before this book was written. There is no mention of this stamp in this section. I guess that's where the "rich man" in the first line comes in!

Portugal

"The early issues of this county are a fine lot of good sound stock well worth collecting. The issues 1853 to 1880 are those to choose for investment.

The Scott Co. group the common and rare perforations all together and ignore important differences of paper; therefore, a collection should be based upon Stanley Gibbons' catalogue, who lists all the varieties."

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My Scott Catalogues for 1922, 1940 and 2019 list the different perforations, but do not price them separately. A note in the 2019 edition refers one to their Scott Classic Specialized Catalogue for these.

Postcards: A picture perfect way to say hello in 300 words or less . . .

The following comes from an email sent to me by an eBay seller I did business with in the past. I generally ignore marketing emails, but I have been reading a lot more email than usual this week, and found the pieces of this little essay I have reproduced here to be worthy of my audience. The author of the essay, Paul Wright, is the owner of Aztec Collectibles, and he can be reached at sales@azteccollectables.com.

One of the areas of collecting that I find fascinating are postcards, especially postally used postcards. I have a very wide selection of mint and mailed postcards from around the world on a variety of topics. Since their invention in 1861, picture postcards have been used to do everything from advertise products, promote tourism, espouse ideological and political views, make people laugh, show natural beauty, and much more.

I have thousands of postcards in stock, mostly used between 1890 and 1950. Some of the themes that I

am interested in are aviation, Zeppelins, ships, ethnic groups, colonies, military, and country views. My military postcards include postcards from all countries and conflicts around the world. On country views, I especially like real picture postcards of main streets with old cars and how things looked a hundred years ago. Some collectors like un-mailed postcards because they tend to be in better condition, but I find the postally used postcards to be interesting because they often tie the topic of the postcard to a location or a destination that is also interesting. It also eliminates guessing about the age of the postcard when it has a cancellation on it!

The wonderful thing about collecting is that we can and do choose to collect whatever it is that interests us. A while back I listed a collection of South African postcards from the early 20th century, and one depicted a rhinoceros. It quickly sold and the buyer, who was in England, asked me if I had anymore. I checked and that was the only one I had, and I asked him what he collected. He said he only collected postcards depicting rhinos, and he had collected over 3,000 different ones from around the world! Who knew there were that many postcards depicting rhinos?!