

# Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club

December, 2020

No. 17

## Philatelic time-machine: Philately at Christmas-tide

By Lewis G. Quackenbush

*This piece originally appeared in the Pennsylvania Philatelist in December, 1893*

Christmas! What magic there is in that one simple word! What vistas of joy and gladness and tender recollection it opens to every one of us! What visions of childhood's delight in the sweet old myth of Santa Claus, that word recalls! What recollections of Christmas trees, and Christmas sweets, and Christmas gifts, and Christmas parties, and Christmas tales it conjures up. That grim old tyrant, Father Time, has somehow or other managed to wriggle through another year, and as a consequence, King Christmas is again with us, with all his elves and brownies in attendance. Both young and old hail his coming with delight. Everything has taken on its holiday aspect. The stores are filled to overflowing with their tempting wares, and eager purchasers throng the streets of every city. Evergreen and holly deck many a dwelling; and the Christmas trees are in their places, their branches bending with the weight of their glittering load. Christmas greetings spread from every lip, and even the sleigh bells jingle their "Merry Christmas", as they dash along the snow-covered streets. It is a season of undiluted pleasure. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak all join in celebrating that famous birthday of almost two thousand years ago.

Even Philately feels the frivolent Christmas spirit; for her publications hasten to do honor to the day by donning their holiday attire, brightly colored and of handsome pattern, and presenting to their readers a veritable Christmas feast of good things. "Reading maketh a full man", and once a year at least we can satisfy our appetite for philatelic love. The average monthly bill of fare is, as a rule, far too scanty to appease our hunger for philatelic literature, hence the holiday number can be considered as a boon to suffering philately. I doubt not that in the various holiday numbers in our periodicals, Christmas poems and Christmas novelettes will appear for the delectation of the faithful. Indeed I have great hopes that this year's batch of Christmas numbers will contain more matter relating to that holiday than formerly. The usual articles on the roulette and the grille can advantageously be replaced for once by "A Christmas Tale of Philately" or "The Christmas Gifts of Famous Philatelists" or something of that sort.

I suppose I should have began this article by wishing my readers a Merry Christmas, individually and collectively. That I did not do so was an oversight on my part. But it is better late than never, and I will stop at this stage of the essay to present to my readers the compliments of the season and to express the hope that their holidays may be filled with nothing but pleasure from the beginning to the end thereof. And I am free to say that I do not know of any particular class of men more likely to fully appreciate the joys of this festal season than philatelists, for they are, as a rule, happy, contented, whole-hearted men, at peace with themselves and the world.

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It would be very interesting to know how our most famous philatelists spend Christmas. I'll wager that the stamp album is not long neglected, even during the week of dissipation and late hours between Christmas and New Years, a week always notable for entertainments of all kinds. I wonder if there is much exchanging of gifts between philatelists. For my own part, last Yule-tide brought me no philatelic presents worth mentioning and I hardly expect any great influx of complimentary knick-knacks this season. But perhaps among the greater lights of philately, philatelic gifts are common and I fancy that few gifts are more prized than these.

Some six moons ago, I was very much pleased to find that Santa Claus had placed a Scott's International Album upon our family Christmas tree, ticketed with my name. It was my first printed album and I think that I have never had a present, before or since, from which I extracted so much unalloyed pleasure. There are few gifts more likely to satisfy the heart of the average American youth than a complete philatelic outfit; namely, an album, a catalogue, a good packet of stamps, and a subscription to some first-class stamp journal. It may be rather late for a pointer on Christmas gifts, still if any non-philatelic father of a philatelic son should chance to read these lines, I hope that he will appreciate my suggestion of an appropriate gift and "make a note on it", as Captain Cuttle would have said, for use next year, if this year's Christmas schedule is already made out. Probably many fond parents will start their boys on the philatelic branch of the royal road to learning to present Christmas by gift of albums or packets of stamps; and very likely Santa Claus was the philatelic god-father of many who read these lines.

Even the stamp dealers have a holiday trade, or at least they call it so. Not that they cover their albums with holly or furnish a Christmas carol with each packet. Neither do they have a special Christmas stamp for sale, though such a stamp would undoubtedly be a big seller. It is rather a wonder that a Christmas stamp, to be used on that day only, has not been issued by some enterprising government in need of funds. How philatelists would snap them up. Or suppose the idea was elaborated and a series of stamps was issued representing Santa Claus in various scenes, a la Columbus. On one stamp, the worthy saint might be represented in his polar home; on another, driving his fiery reindeer o'er the house tops; on a third, performing his famous act of entering a house at dead of night by means of a ten-inch chimney; and on a fourth distributing his gifts via the traditional stocking. Why, Columbus would be nowhere: we would all be howling over the beauty of the new Christmas issue, and saving them, and speculating in them, and writing articles about their great rarity in the future.

I must warn Mr. Seebeck that this Christmas issue notion is fully covered by patent and rights all reserved. I am willing, however to sell him the South American rights for \$150,000 spot cash, and two thirds of the net profits. The U.S. part of the scheme, I shall push personally, and I am in the great hopes that the government will be so pleased with the success of the Columbian issue that the powers that be will welcome my project with open arms. If only the late, lamented Wan Johnmaker were still in the harness I would be absolutely confident of success; but I fear that Mr. Bissell will not be so tractable a subject.

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*“Heap on more wood. The wind is chill, But let it whistle as it will, We’ll keep our Christmas merry still.”*

These lines of Walter Scott’s embody the very essence of Christmas. The good cheer of the fireside, at this happy season, seems comfortable and homelike, because the storm is howling outside, and the air is chilly and sharp, and the snow covers the landscape, everywhere.

My friend and brother collector as you sit by your cosy fireside tonight, snatching a moment from the holiday festivities to read this Christmas number of your favorite journal, I send you a hearty greeting. May your Christmas be a gladsome one. May your gifts be many. I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. – Lewis G. Quackenbush



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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

Courtesy of the Philatelic Society of Lancaster County ([lcps-stamps.org](http://lcps-stamps.org))

**\*\*The Some Sunday Stamp Show scheduled for December 19 – 20 is Cancelled\*\***

**PSLC PROGRAMS:** For the remainder of 2020, the PSLC will hold **Virtual Bi-Monthly Meetings**, which shall begin promptly at 6:30 PM and run for ~90 minutes via Zoom video conferencing. For details to attend these meetings please contact [Paul Petersen](mailto:pcpetersen@comcast.net) via email ([pcpetersen@comcast.net](mailto:pcpetersen@comcast.net)) or call +1 (717) 299-5640. We usually hold a brief business meeting led by President DiComo, followed by our keynote speaker(s) and a Show & Tell, where Members & Guests can share in a few minutes their favorite stamp, cover, or other philatelic item(s) and take a question or two. We look forward to seeing you!

- December 23: [Charles J. DiComo, PhD](#), PSLC & ESPHS President, *Banking in the Village of Pawling, NY and Surrounding Townships as told through Postal History, Bank Checks, Currency, Revenue Stamps and Postal Cards: 1849–1929*. Dr. DiComo lived in Pawling, New York for a decade, and began researching the history of village, town, hamlets and neighborhoods in Dutchess County. He began collecting its postal history, along with real photo postcards, postal cards, postal stationery, Victorian trade cards, railroad tickets, newspapers, hotel paraphernalia, etc. A sub-collection grew from this to include Bank Checks, Promissory Notes, Bank Tags, Fractional & Federal Currency, Revenue-stamped documents and other Ephemera. He recently published an article on a portion of this story, [The Life of Hiram Vail and the Obsolete Notes produced for his Banking & Collection Office in Amenia, New York](#), *Paper Money*, May-June 2019, Vol. LVIII, No. 3, Whole No. 321, pp. 190-194. Enjoy!

January 12: *French Balloon Mail*, by Richard Colberg. Dick Colberg is the longstanding President of the Lebanon (PA) Stamp Collectors Club. His specialty is postal history largely for U.S., France, and Mexico, among others. He exhibits and publishes widely here and in France where he is a member there in several societies. He is active in APS, PSLC, CCNY, the PA Postal History Society, and others. He is an accredited philatelic appraiser, and lives several months of the year in France.

January 27: *The Map Stamps of Panama*, by John Howker. These detailed map stamps originated in Columbia and then changed issuance to Panama when the latter gained its independence. This was shortly followed by the demarcation of the Canal Zone across the isthmus in preparation for the construction of the Panama Canal. As a new country, Panama used existing map stamps of Columbia and overprinted then in 1904 with both 'Panama' and 'Canal Zone'. Other renditions followed for the next two years. Various overprints were used during this period, and they varied by city. Bio: John Howker is the Treasurer of the Brandywine Valley Stamp Club and Chairman of the the club's DELPEX Committee, their annual stamp show.

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- February 10: *1890: The Jubilee Celebrations of the Penny Post*, by Michael Bach

February 24: *The Providence, R.I. Pre-Mailing Control Marking on the U.S. 3 Cent 1851-57 Stamp*, by Charles J. DiComo, PhD, President of PSLC & ESPHS. The re-discovery nearly 20 years ago of a number of covers and adhesives led to a re-examination of what had previously been termed a silent precancel on the U.S. 3¢ stamp, 1851-57 Issue. The adhesives have either a single horizontal and/or vertical ruled line (or both) in black pencil and/or red pencil (or both) spanning the stamp from edge to edge. An examination of over 600 Providence covers (and many more stamps) from 1851 through 1860 and the discovery of thirteen year-dated covers confirmed the period of use as April 1855 to October 1857. These control marked 3¢ adhesives were post-cancelled with the Providence, RI CDS and accepted for postage at the Providence PO. Brown University appears to be a main “account” holder, with other prominent businesses and families partaking, e.g.: Corliss Steam Engine Co.; H.F. Walling Publishers; Slade; Comstock; Steere, et al. This original research and remarkable story of ingenuity at the Providence, RI Post Office can now be shared. The lecture shall be followed by our ever-popular Show & Tell

### 2021 LSCC Dues are now payable!

We enter the new year with high hopes that once again we'll be able to safely and comfortably meet together in the community room at the library again. But for now, the situation dictates otherwise. I contacted Don Smith about the matter of dues payments, and we decided in the interim to collect dues by mail this year. Dues are \$10 and may be mailed to me at the following address: Scott Ney, 3187 Oak Street, Lebanon PA 17042. I will also accept dues payments via PayPal ([stnst2@aol.com](mailto:stnst2@aol.com)). I will forward all payments received (the full amount, including any service charges that may be incurred by PayPal) to Don for deposit into our account. If you are like me, and didn't have the opportunity to pay your dues before the pandemic hit last spring, please consider including a \$10 payment for last year as well. This newsletter is produced and provided via email free of charge; dues payments help cover the use of our home room at the Lebanon Community Library. If you have any questions, or you would like to join us and become a member of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club, please send me an email.

### Have an idea for the newsletter? Please share it with us!

Would you like to see your work published? We'd certainly like to read it! Whether you are a novice at philatelic writing, or an accomplished author, your work is appreciated here.

Do you have other collections that you are passionate about? In my quest for material, your editor will consider anything that might be remotely related to stamp collecting. Also, if you have any want lists or extra material to sell or trade, I'd like to start a “marketplace” section for our members. Please email any submissions to [stnst2@aol.com](mailto:stnst2@aol.com). Thanks, and have a safe and enjoyable holiday season! – Scott Ney