

# Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club

August, 2021

Number 25

**August Meeting: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 in the community room at the  
Lebanon Community Library**

**6:30 – 8:00 PM**



## **Pick The Counterfeit 3¢ Presidential Issue Sc#807CF1!**

*By Hal Klein*

Can you tell the mafia's counterfeit 3¢ Thomas Jefferson Presidential Issue at first glance? Look a little closer. Hint: you can't tell by the color.

Since the first U.S. postage stamp was issued in 1847, forgers have attempted to beat the system, either by copying the printing or by taking a real postage stamp, soaking, removing a cancel and re-using a stamp. Everything you think of has been attempted from applying a grill, removing a grill, adding perfs, removing perfs, repairing perfs to removing cancellations.

Counterfeits breakdown into two basic categories: organized crime/Government-inspired and dealer/collector inspired.

Organized crime focuses on low-dollar, high-volume "current postage rate-of-the-day definitive issues" sold to businesses over Ebay, Delcampe or by questionable commercial printers selling on Asia's business site, Alibaba. Organized crime and Government-organized counterfeit stamps from Germany in WWII; Russia and Eastern-Bloc countries like East Germany in the 1950s-1980s; North Korea, and China are attempts to defraud Uncle Sam.

Dealer/Collector focuses on high-dollar, low-quantity rarities to defraud collectors.

Postal Inspectors play a constant game of *wack-a-mole* in an attempt to put modern high-volume counterfeiters out-of-business.

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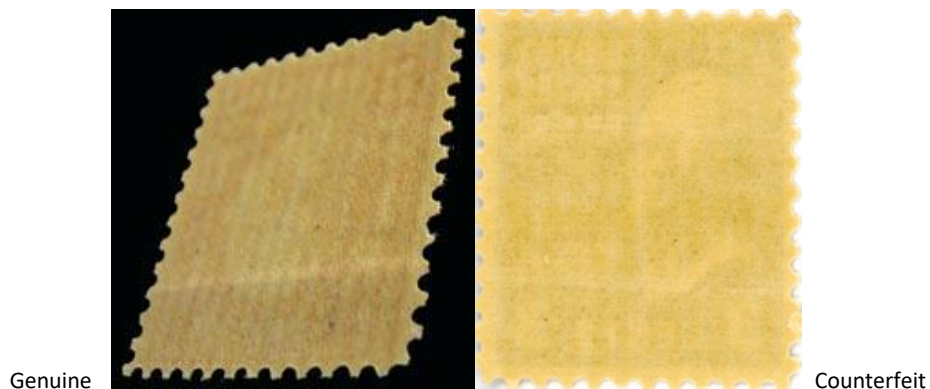
The first real successful counterfeit stamp created to defraud the U.S. Post Office was in the 1890s, when counterfeiters in Chicago forged the common, two-cent red, first bureau issue. The printing was crude and the paper was thicker than normally found on the Sc#220. The crooks were eventually caught due to sharp-eyed postal clerks.

There were two attempts in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the Second Bureau Issue, the Washington-Franklin Issue and one in the 1940s – the Mafia-inspired counterfeit 3¢ Thomas Jefferson Presidential Issue (Sc#807CF1) shown above.

Three things gave the counterfeiters away and it wasn't really the printing. The printing was almost perfect, so how did the counterfeiters get caught? Again, these counterfeit stamps were spotted by a sharp-eyed postal clerk. What caught the postal clerk's attention was a mail-order business customer, who over-paid the postage on their parcel post packages... on every package, overpaying with 3¢ stamps day-after-day, package-after-package to all eight postal zones. It didn't make sense to the clerk and when he looked closely at the stamps, something else didn't look right – the 3¢ stamps!

A stamp basically consists of the following elements: paper, ink, the printed image, perforations, and gum. Of course he couldn't see the gum, but it was the perforations that caught his eye. They were the wrong size! The postal clerk put the packages aside and alerted the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. (U.S. Postal Inspectors carry a badge and gun – they're U.S. Marshals!) The U.S. Postal Inspectors removed the 3¢ Thomas Jefferson stamps and analyzed the paper, printing, and perforations. The clerk's hunch appeared to be correct. The stamps appeared to be counterfeit and they were sent to the F.B.I. for analysis.

The 3¢ Presidential Issue was printed on the Stickney rotary printing press at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) in Washington, D.C. One of the problems encountered with rotary printed issues like the Presidential Issue was that gummed-printed rotary sheets "curl" after printing while flat plate printed sheets did not curl. Benjamin R. Stickney, creator of the Stickney Rotary Press, felt gum must be the cause of the curling. The sheets were curling in a vertical direction to the design. He found by simply adding "horizontal gum breaks" the curling was reduced. Horizontal gum breaks turned out to be one of the features that gave away the counterfeiters.



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The second problem was Ink application. On some of the counterfeit issues, the ink appeared “blotchy” or uneven, but the third and final counterfeit “tell” were the perforations. The genuine perforation size on the Presidential Issue is perf. 11 x 10½. The counterfeit is perf was 12 x 12!

Using a blend of photography and lithograph printing, 33-year-old Nathan Levine of New York City counterfeited copies of the 1938 3¢ Thomas Jefferson stamp. With the stamp in great demand to satisfy the first-class letter rate, Levine easily sold sheets of 100 perforate and imperforate stamps for \$1.75 each until his 1949 arrest.<sup>1</sup>

Roland Rustad’s book “THE PREXIES” summarized, “In 1949, New York newspapers reported that bags had been found containing more than 8,000,000 counterfeit 3¢ stamps. These were in sheets of 100 stamps, some completely perforated, some perforated only horizontally or vertically, and some imperforate.” He further stated, “...the gum was yellowish and flat, without the rotary press gum ridges. The stamp impressions were not of the quality produced by the Bureau, but they were good enough to fool many people.”<sup>2</sup>



In an article that appeared in the *Sunday New York Daily News* on April 2, 1950, the infamous Assistant New York District Attorney Roy Cohn was quoted as stating, “...Levine had decided to surrender because he believed his capture was imminent.” Cohn went on to say, “...Natie had grown a mustache and dyed his locks, switching from light to brunette.” An article under the headline: “LAW COLLECTS STAMP

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*FUGITIVE*” by Kermit Jaediker stated, “*He was remanded to the custody of the U.S. Marshal and will plead Tuesday morning to an indictment charging him and 16 others with conspiracy to sell 10,000,000 counterfeit 3-cent stamps. Nine of the sixteen indicted were sentenced to prison terms, while then remaining seven drew suspended sentences.*”<sup>3</sup>

So, which stamp did you pick as the counterfeit 3¢ Thomas Jefferson Presidential Issue Sc#807CF1? Did you pick (a) or (b)? The correct choice is (a)! The first stamp is the counterfeit 3¢ Thomas Jefferson Scott #807CF1.

References:

1. [www.Mysticstamp.com/Products/United-States/807\(CF1\)/USA/](http://www.Mysticstamp.com/Products/United-States/807(CF1)/USA/)
2. The Prexies, Roland E. Rustad, ©1994 The Bureau Issues Association, Inc., Belleville, Ill., pp.57  
New York Daily News©, LAW COLLECTS STAMP FUGITIVE

## The A.P.R.L., a Treasure in our Backyard

By Dick Colberg

I’ve just come from a week of volunteering at the APS in Bellefonte, PA. (July 19-23) This was the eleventh time in the past twelve years – 2020 was a non-year – that I’ve done this. The APS put out a call for volunteers in 2010 for a week’s work in various departments of the APS, all on the volunteer’s dime. The program has been wildly successful and every year about 40 folks show up to work; many are repeat volunteers. Many lasting friendships have been formed. Personally, I’ve been hanging around with a couple from North Tonawanda, NY since 2011. Last week, the three of us got together for a mini-volunteer week; just the three of us.

When signing up for the volunteer week, volunteers are given their choice of which department they’d like to work in. The first year I chose the library because the staff there has always been so helpful in my research activities. I liked it so well, I’ve worked in the library every year since. My two friends have also worked in the library every year since 2011.

The library, of course, is the American Philatelic Research Library, A.P.R.L. It is the largest philatelic library in the U.S.A. I’m told that worldwide, only the philatelic library in Munich, Germany is larger. As an aside, the book I wrote on World War II Patriotic Labels is in both libraries!

In the early years, my work in the library involved a lot of grunt-work; moving books around due to space limitations. But, since the new library has been completed, there are not so many space issues. So, mostly, my work is at the computer. There have been days on end of creating bar code labels for the books; pricing excess books for de-acquisition and sale, and this year, sorting through approximately 2,000 newly donated books to see which are keepers and which are excess. You see, the A.P.R.L. has a policy of only keeping two of everything (it used to be three). Each title had to be searched to determine if it was in inventory, and if so what quantity.

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The excess books are priced and put out for sale. In all the books I sorted last week, I was surprised that almost half were keepers. To look at the shelves there, you'd think they already had everything!

I am constantly amazed by the number of different philatelic subjects philatelists find to write about. Many times, it's an obscure subject of which, seemingly, the author is the only student! I saw a book on Romanian Revenues. Probably not many calls for that one. There were several books in foreign languages: Polish, Danish, Swedish, and German to name a few. I was thinking of Scott Ney as I processed 2-3 books on the German Inflation period of the 1920s.

The obscure, however, can turn out to be very important. Two months ago, I was hired to appraise a 10-volume collection of Imperial Russia; three volumes of which were Russian locals. Scott works just fine for Imperial Russia, but one needs a catalogue called Russian Zemstvos (Locals) by Chuchin. It's available on eBay and Amazon but can be pricey. Fortunately, I found a copy in the A.P.R.L. That's the good news. The bad news is that the catalogue was published in 1925 and has NEVER been updated. Fortunately, too, I was able to identify all the locals according to their Chuchin number and value. The catalogue prices, however, were in Russian Gold Rubles! So, I first had to convert from 1925 Gold Rubles to 1925 U.S. Dollars. Then adjust for inflation for U.S. Dollars from 1925 to 2021. Let's hear it for Google!

In addition to almost any philatelic book you could want, the A.P.R.L. also has a huge collection of Society journals and auction catalogues. Last week one of my friends spent the whole week culling out the 3<sup>rd</sup> copy (unnecessary) of many philatelic journals. That freed up several feet of shelf space.

The books I sorted last week were donated by two different collectors. While I was there, I was shown a massive library donation from one person. The books were stacked on about six 8-foot tables and each table was entirely covered by about 15-inches of books. The recently retired, assistant librarian is coming in a couple of days each week to sort those books. Seems like a job for life!

I hope you will consider the A.P.R.L. as a valuable resource in your philatelic endeavors. It's only a couple hours' drive for most of you. Anyone can use the library, but only A.P.S. members can check books out. And, if you're an A.P.S. member, you can call the library and they'll send a book or books to you by mail. The cost is a reasonable \$13 plus return postage.

If you visit the library, I urge you to scan the shelves of used books for sale. I've gotten some real gems that way. You can also peruse the used books from the comfort of your stamp room via computer. Go to [www.stamps.org](http://www.stamps.org). Click on [SERVICES](#) and, under that, click on [LIBRARY](#). On that page, scroll down to [ACCESSING OUR LIBRARY COLLECTIONS](#). Then click on the highlighted [NEW ONLINE CATALOG](#). Then click on [USED BOOKS FOR SALE](#). In the search bar at the top of that page enter the title or author of the book you're looking for. If your book is listed for sale, there will be a few words about the condition and the price. I think it's then possible to process

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your order online, but I didn't delve that far into it. If it's me, I'd just call the APS and order it from the library! (814-933-3803)

In closing, I'd urge you to consider volunteering for next year's work week. It's a lot of fun.

## **After more than a year, a last-minute club meeting**

On July 20, members of the LSCC held their first official meeting at the Lebanon Community Library in over a year. There was not much notice given to the members, but Don Smith, Joe Duke, and Scott Ney were able to make it into the library that evening.

There was no formal program. We each bought a couple of items hastily grabbed from our shelves. Don brought a couple of legal tender \$2 bills which were postmarked with stamps for the Bi-Centennial, and an old composition book with some interesting stamps which probably belonged to a young collector long ago. Don also bought in a couple of albums of used plate blocks that he found at an auction to browse through. Joe brought in one of his favorite Panama sets from 1916, which he purchased just before the pandemic – single stamps and on-cover. There were philatelic covers with sets of the issue, but also with many interesting markings on the back, and covers with single stamps from the set. Of course, one of them featured an inverted stamp! Scott brought in a binder with material from the M. S. Hershey First Day Ceremony in 1995, which comes from Arthur Groff's collection.

We spent much of our time in general conversation, catching up with each other after more than a year of COVID-induced recess. While the library was still on reduced hours, closing at 7:00 PM, they allowed us to meet until 7:30. The library resumed their regular hours on August 2, so we'll be able to meet from 6:30 to 8:00. Hopefully most of us will be able to be there! – Scott Ney

## **Do you remember Lebplex?**

If you do, please share some of your memories, anecdotes, and best finds for inclusion in the October issue of the newsletter. If there are enough of them, we'll devote the entire newsletter to the LSCC's signature show of the past. – Scott Ney

## **Calendar of Events**

**Tuesday, September 21, 2021: LSCC meeting in the community room of the Lebanon Community Library, 125 N 7<sup>th</sup> St, Lebanon 17046** 6:30 – 8:00 PM Program to be determined.

Wednesday, August 25: Virtual PSLC meeting. Jamestown, 1907 presented by Roger Brody. For information on this and other Philatelic Society of Lancaster County programs and events, check out their website: ([lcps-stamps.org](http://lcps-stamps.org)). The PSLC's YouTube channel has reached their goal of 100 subscribers, but there's still room for you and thousands more. Please check it out next time you're logged on to YouTube: ([835](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC835...)) [Philatelic Society of Lancaster County Pennsylvania - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC835...)