

## The

 OverprintNewsletter of the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club

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## Issue: May - June 2023

Meetings held at Calvary Lutheran Church, 1009 Elizabeth Avenue in Laureldale. Elizabeth Avenue crosses Kutztown Road in the Muhlenberg Township area. Most meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. See you there!

Tuesday, May $2^{\text {nd }}$ at 7:00 p.m.

## "A Visit To A First Day Ceremony" <br> ...presented by Don Barron



On March $7^{\text {th }}$ 2023, the USPS unveiled a forever stamp honoring the life and legacy of author Toni Morrison (1931-2019) in Princeton NJ.

Come hear the story of the day.

## Show and Tell after Don's Presentation:

Bring any philatelic item relating to Authors and Books

From Your E-Editor:
As promised last month this edition has a more USA focus. I have been scouring the internet for interesting / unusual articles. Additionally, I am starting a new section on Topical Collecting. If you collect a topic and want to feature it, send me some information or send me topical subject you would like me to feature. I stumbled on an article on Stamps on Stamps and as that is what I collect it is the featured Topical in this Overprint. Enjoy, Mike

# The man who bought Alaska 

William H Seward, who brokered the United States' purchase of Alaska, was involved in other pivotal events in US history, including the anti-slavery movement and an attempt on his life because of his links to President Abraham Lincoln. Chris West explores the pioneering statesman celebrated on this stamp.

The coast of Alaska was colonised by Russian explorers in the 18th century. In 1821 Tsar Alexander formally claimed the coastline. However, it was never a very profitable colony. After the Crimean War drained the Russian exchequer, they began negotiations with the US to sell them the territory, fearing that otherwise it might fall into the hands of their enemies, the British.

America had other matters on its mind at the time, as this was during the Civil War. Once that had ended, serious negotiations began. These ended with the US paying $\$ 7.2$ million for the 600,000 square miles of territory- that's around eight times the area of Great Britain. A seafront house with $21 / 2$ acres in the Alaskan town of Kodiak is currently on sale for around $\$ 4$ million. At the time the deal was roundly criticized, the New York Tribune calling it an 'insensate folly'.

The man who made the purchase happen is celebrated on this stamp. William H Seward trained as a lawyer in New York State. He was an outspoken opponent of slavery and offered sanctuary to runaway slaves as part of the 'underground railroad' system. In 1860, he contested the leadership of the then-new Republican Party with Abraham Lincoln. When the latter won, he wisely made Seward his Secretary of State (equivalent to our Foreign Secretary). During the Civil War, Seward's diplomacy helped keep foreign powers, angry at the sudden disappearance of cotton supplies, out of the conflict.

Lincoln's assassination in 1865 is often portrayed as the act of a deranged loner, but it was actually part of a carefully-laid plot, which also included an attempt to kill Seward. Seward was unwell, and former Confederate spy Lewis Powell

blagged his way into Seward's house by pretending to be delivering medicine. There, he was challenged by Seward's son, whom he fought off. He broke inro Seward's bedroom and stabbed him. Seward recovered, but his wife, overcome by the shock of the attack, died soon after. Powell escaped but was captured three days later when he turned up at the house of another conspirator, Mary Surratt, which was being watched by the police. He was tried by a military tribunal and hanged.

Seward stayed on as Secretary of State and brokered the Alaska deal in 1867. He died in 1872. His last words were reputedly 'Love one another'.

His purchase remained controversial until gold was discovered in the Klondike valley in 1896. News travelled slowly in those days, and it wasn't till 1897 that the Gold Rush began. Of the around 100,000 'Klondikers' who descended on the area, only a handful (including dancer Kathleen Rockwell, a.k.a. Klondike Kate) became and stayed rich. The rush was immortalized in the novels of Jack London and the poems of Robert W Service (You know what it's like in the Yukon wild when it's
sixty-nine below... from The Ballad of Blasphemous Bill.

This stamp was produced in 1909, to coincide with the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in Seattle. Expositions were popular in the US at that time as showcases for local and national businesses and general celebrations of the march of technology. US commemorative stamps of the era consisted of a series of 'boosts' for these events. Th is Expo was designed to showcase Alaska. As part of the gold rush had been in Canada, Yukon was added to the name. Pacific was added even later, to stress potential trade with the Far East. Exhibits included a giant log cabin, a Japanese gateway, a room full of incubators with real babies in, and a memorial to Seward, the man who had made it all possible

## Courtesy of

www.allaboutstamps.co.uk

## Phonograph letters sent home after World War II

U.S. Stamp Notes by John M. Hotchner from Linns



In the U.S. Stamp Notes column in the July 12, 2021, issue of Linn's, I presented a 1947 mailed voice recording of a Marine stationed at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro in California. The envelope said it was "A Recordio message from a U.S. Marine."

Since then, I have found a few more examples of mailed phonograph records, each different from the original mailing.

The earliest is the cover in Figure 1, "A recorded message from Your Man In The Service" sent "through courtesy of Pepsi-Cola," mailed June 20, 1947. It's from Don Waddell, a sailor aboard the USS Hector (AR-7), a repair vessel deployed in the western Pacific.

The cover is franked with three 1946 5¢ DC-4 Skymaster airmail stamps (Scott C32). The $15 \phi$ in postage paid the domestic airmail rate for up to 3 ounces.

# A Marine wrote home by voice in 1947 

U.S. Stamp Notes by John M. Hotchner from Linns

About 25 years ago, I deep-sixed my record player, which seemed to have been overtaken by newer technology. Record players and vinyl records are making a comeback, but I also gave away all my hundreds of folk music records back then, so I have not jumped on this bandwagon.

And that is a long way of saying that I am not able to play the record shown here in Figure 1, together with the mailing envelope it was sent in almost 75 years ago in Figure 2. Indeed, I wonder if the record still reveals the messages that United States Marine Corps PFC Richard Wallingford in El Toro, Calif., sent to his parents in Everett, Wash., in May 1947?
[Editor's note: The Linn's staff also was curious about what was on the recording. We listened to it, and a rough translation appears at the end of this column. A video recording of the record playing is found on Linn's YouTube channel here]

There may have been thousands, even tens of thousands, of such records produced by either the military or by private companies for soldiers, but the number surviving is very small. I have seen fewer than half a dozen in my collecting experience.

This one came to me because of my interest in the 5¢ airmail stamps (Scott C32) on the mailer. The stamps are part of a series picturing large transport aircraft, a DC-4 Skymaster in this case.

When I began to write for Linn's Stamp News in 1977, I resolved to add a new collecting area each year to make sure I had new topics to write about, but also so that I would never run out of things to search for at dealer tables.

About 10 years ago, Rob Haeseler (1941-2017), then an independent dealer but earlier my editor at Linn's, offered me a starter collection of covers with the aforementioned 5¢ airmail stamp. The history embodied in this collection was fascinating.

I have added a lot to it since and was almost ready to unveil an exhibit when we went into lockdown last year and my exhibiting projects were shelved. But I have continued to add covers, including this one from friend Joe Bock.

Effective Oct. 1, 1946, the domestic airmail rate was reduced to $5 \phi$ per ounce from $8 \not \subset$. The $5 \notin$ rate was in effect only until Dec. 31, 1948, when the rate went to $6 \not \subset$. The two-year window for contemporary uses provides a challenge to finding commercial uses of this stamp.

The record is interesting because of the cartoonlike characterizations of life in the Marine Corps. It was sent without any additional written message, so the mailing was between 1 and 2 ounces - the airmail postage paid by the two $5 \phi$ stamps. Wallingford wrote on the record itself the day it was recorded and added the message "play this side."


## Linn's transcription of 1947 recording from PFC Richard Wallingford

[A few words unintelligible] I wasn't sure it was working so I had to test it. It's a beautiful day out today. Sun is shining, blue skies, a little warm. It's now 11:40. I don't know quite what to say on this, but I'm sure you will enjoy it anyhow. Sounds pretty conceded doesn't it?

I really don't know much to say to you folks. There's a letter I wrote to you yesterday, but I hope you enjoy this anyhow. It's my first attempt, so it won't be very good. If you like this, I will try making some more before I come home.

A bunch of the fellows were just over here shooting a little basketball. They showed out to go to town now. I've got duty this weekend, so I have to stay on the station. It isn't bad though. You can go swimming in the afternoon. In fact, I think I'll do that this afternoon.

How's Sheba? I bet she's getting big. She probably won't even know me when I get home. As far as I've heard my [unintelligible] was gone, too. Sure hope so. I've been [unintelligible] to see you folks. Pretty hard to stand it. But I guess I can survive.

When is Dad leaving for Detroit, Mom? Or haven't you found out yet?
Say, Dad, how about some pictures of your tractor? Bet it's a dandy.

# Tulip Blossoms coil stamps present collecting challenge 

Apr 17, 2023, 3 PM


The United States Tulip Blossoms coil forever stamps released April 5 presented a challenge for the Scott catalog editors in trying to figure out how to collect a plate number strip of an issue that does not follow precedents set by previous coil issues. A similar challenge occurred with the Wild Orchids coil stamps of Feb. 21, 2020 (Scott 5435-5444).

Ten different Tulip Blossoms coil stamps were issued, and the plate number (" $B$ " followed by four single digits) appears on every 27th stamp, which depicts the pink and yellow tulip.

Because of this, Tulip Blossoms coils of 3,000 or 10,000 do not have 10 stamps repeating in order throughout a given roll.

The Scott editors examined a long strip of Tulip Blossoms coil stamps and determined that a strip of 10 different stamps can be removed from a roll. Such a strip of 10 can be found in a roll with and without a plate number single.

On the plate number strip of 10 , the plate number appears on the fifth stamp from the left. This strip of 10 with plate number will be listed in the Scott catalogs and will be included in the 2023 Scott Plate Number Coils album supplement.

For a plate number strip with the plate number stamp in the center of the strip, 17 stamps are needed. This strip has the plate number in the middle with eight stamps on each respective side, however the repeating pattern of these stamps isn't symmetrical and has repeating stamp designs.

The strip of 17 will be listed in the 2024 Scott catalogs, but there will be no Scott album page for it because it is too large to fit.

A collector can remove from a roll a plate number strip of 10 as already described and the immediately following strip of 10 without plate number. What remains are seven stamp designs to make up the full 27 -stamp interval.

The Tulip Blossoms stamps also were issued in a double-sided pane of 20. These stamps are a different size than the coil stamps, so all stamps will be illustrated in the listings in the Scott New Issues Update in the upcoming June Scott Stamp Monthly.

The order of the stamps in the block of 10 found on the side containing 12 stamps in the double-sided pane differs from the order in the strip of 10 different coil stamps.


## Kyrgyzstan issues world's longest postage stamp

Mar 18, 2023, 10 AM


Kyrgyz Express Post claims its Jan. 30 stamp measuring 184 millimeters ( 7.2 inches) long is the world's longest postage stamp. The stamp shows the Chaar-Tash mountain range.


The engraved view of Bad Ems from Joshua's letter of 1840 .

## POSTAL HISTORY

## Between the Sheets: An American in Germany

A family letter sends John Scott on the trail of a prestigious 19th-century US financier and the experiece of taking the waters in a fashionable spa town

The writer or the recipient of a letter is sometimes thought to be a philatelic irrelevance - all that matters is the postal element. However a postage stamp was invented as a simplified receipt for the postage on a letter and the reason for that letter being written in the first place is a vital part of understanding the process. Sadly the bulk of mail which makes up nineteenth century postal history was sent to or from solicitors and the contents are usually mundane. But it is always worth giving a second glance at any letter of a personal nature, especially to or from abroad, and the


The address panel showing carriage from London to New York on the sailing packet Gladiator.
internet now makes it much easier to unveil the story about the characters involved. One such letter ticks many of the social and postal history boxes and was written by Joshua Bates to his sister in 1840 from the German spa town of Bad Ems. This was considered to be one of Germany's most famous bathing resorts in the Victorian era and indeed is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site as one of the 'Great Spa Towns of Europe'.
Joshua had himself been there to take the waters and reports that this place to which I came for the benefit of ny health and I am bappy to say that in seven days I am completely restored; the water which I drink bubbles up hat from the base of the mountain and thousands of people are drinking. The clientele represented the cream of European society including Kaiser Wilhelm himself, Richard Wagner, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Joshua


A typical sailing packet of the period.

observes that there is no occupation for anyone here except climbing the mountains on donkeys and we frequently see the Empress of Russia and her whole court mounted on these humble animals.

Joshua Bates (1788-1864) himself was an American financier born in Weymouth, Massachusetts, to where the letter is addressed to Mrs. W. Weston, his sister Nancy, who had married Captain Warren Weston. By 1828 Joshua was associated with the London merchant bank, Barings Brothers. Later became senior partner there, and founded the Boston Public Library with an endowment of over \$1 million. His business career is reflected in the postal history of the letter which, although written from Bad Ems, was posted at the Lombard Street post office in London, the nearest to the bank's offices, to where it was carried privately by a friend or employee of the writer.

The endorsement at the top left corner of the letter shows that it was carried across the Atlantic by the ship Gladiator of the Red Swallowtail Line under Captain Thomas Britton, receiving a fine strike of the oval dated 'Paid Ship Letter London' mark for 9th July and a New York arrival datestamp of 20th August. Although prepaid 8 d for the ship letter charge, on arrival a further $203 / 4$ cents was due, made up of a further 2 cents ship fee

> An advertisement from the New York Daily Economist of 23 rd April 1840 listing the sailing of the Gladiator which actually departed two days later than planned.


A photograph of Joshua Bates in about 1850.
and an inland charge of $183 / 4$ cents in the United States.

As a postscript Joshua's great granddaughter was Sylvia Brett, the wife of the last White Rajah of Sarawak, Charles Brooke.

Few dealers have the time to research individual letters in such detail, and often even the internet cannot elicit the necessary information, but when you do succeed the effort is truly worthwhile.

FURTHER READING
North Atlantic Packets, Departures \& Arrivals 1818-1840, James Pullin, New York 2009.

# Collecting stamps... on stamps 

## Some 19th-century stamps are simply too rare and expensive for most of us to own, but collecting stamps on stamps allows collectors to add an array of classics to their album

Despite there being earlier examples of stamps depicted on stamps, the subject 'Stamps on Stamps' (often referred to by those in the know as 'SOS') began in earnest in 1940 as many countries started to commemorate their stamp centenaries with new releases portraying their respective first stamp issues - the most famous of which illustrated Sir Rowland Hills' 'Penny Black' issued in Britain on 1 May, 1840.

Throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, Britain had operated post offices all over the globe. These 'British Post Offices Abroad' used Great Britain stamps in far-flung destinations, so when the philatelic world commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black, most countries chose to show one of these
images on their new issues. In 1867, Britain began creating high value stamps starting with the five shilling stamp and this image has also featured on a subsequent stamp, appearing on the 1990 anniversary set released by Australia entitled Rare and Unusual Colonial Stamps.

Britain's own contribution to the 150th anniversary was a miniature sheet, patriotic in design, showcasing the Penny Black alongside a stamp of Victoria and our current monarch, Queen Elizabeth set against a backdrop image of Britannia, ruling the waves!
The philatelic milestones continued and on the anniversary of the death of Rowland Hill in 1879, a similar flurry of tribute issues was created, which not only showed a portrait of the inventor but reacreations of the stamp which made him famous.

## Changing times

Gradually, countries began to use symbolic images representative of their own landmarks and people to illustrate their stamps. Produced in April 1851, Canada's first stamp, the 3 pence beaver, marked the first time an image other than the portrait of the Queen was shown on their stamps. The Canadian International Philatelic Youth Exhibition of 1982 chose to use this pioneering issue along with four other historical stamps on their celebratory minisheet.

The annivesaries of major events and icons in history have been commemorated on stamps using older stamps, including the bicentenary of the Independence of the USA with an early US stamp depicting the Surrender at Saratoga displayed on the issues of

## PENNY BLACK



Upper Volta - a country which also honoured America's early presidents with a minisheet bringing together past stamp reproductions of George Washington, Andrew Jackson and Zachary Taylor.
Other nations have chosen to incorporate detailed images from their postal history. Montserrat released a set of six stamps, in 2008, paying homage to the first Caribbean stamp, another depicting the famous Penny Black and a fascinating design showing two Mulready envelopes - the first decorative prepaid envelopes introduced in 1840 as part of Britain's postal reform. With a face value of $\$ 2.75$ each, these are essential items for any album, crossing the boundaries between postal history collectables and the SOS thematic.

Russia's first stamp went on sale in December 1857, but was not valid for public use until January 1858. The imperforate stamp depicting the Russian Coat of Arms was first valued at 10 kopeck and printed in brown and blue typography. It reappeared on a 150th anniversary edition displayed against a Russian map and illustrated with a vintage postal troika used to transport the mail.

Over in the US, AMERIPEX ' 86 was the largest international stamp exhibition the country had ever seen, so to promote the event, a commemorative featuring a reproduction of an early US stamp was created depicting Benjamin Franklin, the nation's first Postmaster General.

## Know your stuff

There is a simple format to follow when recognising the various types of stamps on stamps. As a rule they are split into three main categories:

- Type A - refers to those stamps that contain a full or part reproduction of the original stamp.
- Type B - denotes those stamps that contain part of the original design or use the same design with modifications
- Type U - covers those stamps portrayed symbolically rather than as an identifiable issue, such as a stamp on an envelope, or in an album.


## UNITED STATES



The USA have recalled previous designs on their postage, including an Ameripex ' 86 value showing a Benjamin Frankiin stamp; a 1972 8c stamp for the 125th anniversary of the first US Stamp; and a 1986 set of four again promoting our hobby and showing specific designs.


The Inverted Jenny stamp of 1918 was one of the world's most famous errors. Almost a century later the US Postal Service reproduced the design on a \$2 stamp, cheekily introducing a modern-day rarity to the market by including some 'upright' versions.


Australia have issued many stamps showing the classics and early too, with stamps on stamps from the 1950s onwards. The 'Rare and Unusual Colonial Stamps' set of 1990 showcased a range of designs; the pair issued in 1950 to mark the nation's stamp centenary simply added 'ONE HUNDRED YEARS' amd a small caption to the original designs, making them one desirable 'stamp-on-stamps'; and the 1976 design for National Stamp Week reproduced the famous Kangaroo and Map stamp, in various stages of printing, alongside its designer Blamire Young.

## AUSTRALIA



Once your thematic collecting is under way, you may want to segregate your albums into topics within topics, perhaps concentrating on those stamps relating to Sir Rowland Hill, anniversary editions, or special issues created for stamp exhibitions. By widening your search you'll realise that
ships, historical events and famous people have all been portrayed, so the choice of category is up to you.

Despite the 1940 centenary landmark, there were various SOS issues before this date. Michael Merritt, an avid collector and secretary of the Stamps on Stamps Collectors


## MAURITIUS 'POST OFFICE'

The world famous Mauritius Post Office stamps have made a philatelic comeback on a variety of stamps, perhaps most notably on a 1947 set marking the centenary of the stamps and showing King George VI beside the rudimentary image of his great grandmother. Further appearances came in 1970 in a set marking the Centenary of General Post Office; in 1978 when a pictorial definitive showed the famous Lady Gomm ball invitation cover bearing the stamp; and in 1979 with a set marking the centenary of the death of Rowland Hill. Further homages to the stamp came in 1991, 1997, 2010, 2012, and 2022, not to mention the many other countries, such as the Czech Republic, to have reproduced the stamp on their own designs..


Club (SOSCC), gives us a fascinating insight into some of the nineteenth century stamps that appeared on nineteenth-century issues.
'For those of us who are happy to collect stamps portraying stamps symbolically (rather than identifiable issues) there are a few to go by,' he says. 'The first that I have is a local US issue, the Ledger Dispatch, issued for a few months in 1882. Surinam has an 1892 issue that portrays a pseudo-stamp, along with India-Sirmoor who issued stamps in 1893, but since they added a printed perforation around the earlier stamp image, this might be considered a true Stamp on Stamp.'
Just fitting into this ninetcenthcentury category, Michael describes one of his favourite issues. 'In 1900, Swizerland celebrated the 25 th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union and issued a number of varieties around a common design which portrays a winged Swiss figure casting franked envelopes to the wind. The postcard image has an enlargement of the design on the stamp that was used to carry it to its destination. I particularly enjoy such non-philatelic covers, which are usually inexpensive but often rare in topical collections.'

Michael describes himself as 'a gourmand, collecting all types, mint and used, on covers, first day covers, and maxi cards', but even he has a particular item he would love to see in his collection. 'In 1951, Hungary issued a number of beautifully engraved varieties that celebrated the eightiech anniversary of their first issue. The Scott C95 issue was printed in a special rose lilac souvenir sheet, with 1,200 copies perforated and imperf for the arranging committee of the commemorating stamp exhibition. I have seen first day covers bearing the rose lilac issue... when I win the lottery this will be one of my priority acquisitions!"
'This topic takes stamp collecting to the extreme," he explains. 'If you love stamps, what other topical category is there? Since particularly beautiful and valuable stamps are often chosen for depiction, this topic offers an opportunity to collect exquisite specimens at a very reasonable cost. Have fun! Get a copy
of our checklist from the SOSCC website at www.stampsonstamps.org then use it to select a narrower focus, for example, nineteenth-century stamps, or stamps under glass those issues portraying stamps being examined by magnifying glass.'

With thanks to Michael Merritt, Plinio Richelmi and Martin Hirschbühl of the SOSCC.

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| France's first stamps depicted the goddess Ceres facing left. This classic design was revisited in 1948 on a single value showing a portrait of Etienne Arago and, if you look closely, a Ceres stamp in the top left. A clearer reproduction of the famous stamp was seen on a 1970 value marking the centenary of France's print production moving to Bordeaux. |  |  |

## STAMPS ON STAMPS - TYPE U



Unidentified stamps (type $U$ to the expert 'stamps on stamps' collectors) can be found on hundreds, perhaps thousands, of stamp issues, so where to begin?

Seek out stamps issued for philatelic exhibitions, national stamp days, those designs reflecting the postal service, and stamps issued to help promote the hobby to youngsters. Other fruitful stamp subjects are letter writing and, more recently, post crossing, the sending of postcards to fellow enthusiasts around the world.

## Timbre des

> Union postale un?


