

"Serving Lebanon and Berks Counties"

# THE PATENT - OVERPRINT

The combined monthly newsletter of the Lebanon and Reading Stamp Collectors Clubs

February 2025

Number 66

The February meeting of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Lebanon Community Library, 125 N. 7<sup>th</sup> St, in historic downtown Lebanon. Please join us for *Basics of Stamp Collecting*, with Dick Colberg, and bring along a new find or a favorite item from your collection to share with us.

## Two Sides to Every Story

By Hal Klein, PSLC #467



I don't think I'm speaking out of school if I say the listings and descriptions on eBay leave much to be desired . . . not to mention the scans of the sold items. This was an item I found, no, stumbled across, by accident several years ago. The item was not listed or shown as a stampless cover, it was being sold as a document. The document side was clean, but the stampless cover side . . . well, as you can see, was scribbled on, dirty, and stained.

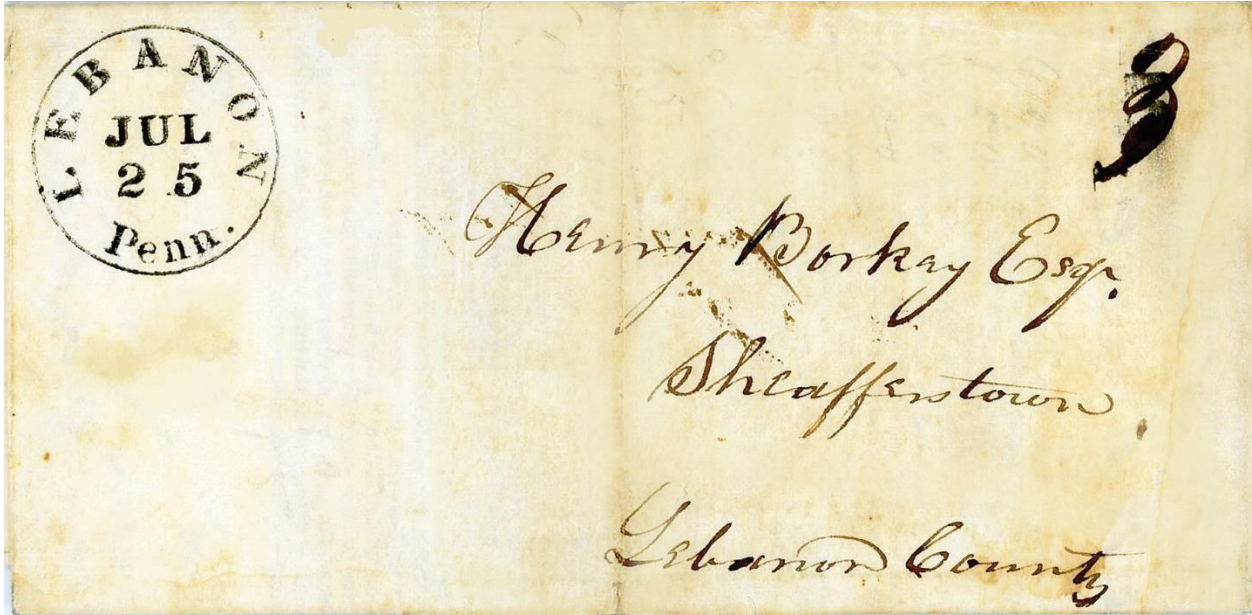
Originally, I decided to pass on the item. It was over-priced as a document and a basic Lebanon, Pa. C.D.S. stampless folded cover – but there was something about the three-cent rate. The dealer re-listed the cover several times over six months, each time dropping the price. The cover never sold. In the interim, I contacted the dealer, got a readable scan of the document, and sent him an offer of \$25 . . . well below his original asking price of \$125 six months earlier.

So, many of you are running to the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* and saying wait a minute . . . \$25 for a basic black 30mm “Lebanon, Penn.”? Look again . . . the rate and the circular: a scarce (for Lebanon County) local, one-sheet three-cent Collect (Act of March 3, 1847/Effective July 1, 1847) (1). The circular was printed on vellum (yes, vellum), and this is how the cover now appears after I cleaned it with a soft art eraser and other established methods.

This piece of 1849 history opens a door to Pennsylvania's history far earlier than I ever imagined . . . a door to William Penn and the formation of Pennsylvania as a colony in 1682; to Pennsylvania's Charter and Benjamin Franklin to a time before this country was a nation and all military organizations and obligations were abolished. At the time William Penn drew Pennsylvania on a map and divided her counties in the 1600's, Lebanon County did not exist. It would not exist until it was carved out of Lancaster and Dauphin Counties in the late 1700s to become its own county in 1813.



William Penn was a Quaker and Pennsylvania was founded on Quaker beliefs, including pacifism and refusing to take legal oaths; guns, militias, and killing; or providing funds to purchase arms in the colonies for common defense were not part of the Quaker doctrine. In fact, William Penn's colony was among the last of the original thirteen to permit its citizens to bear arms in a legally constituted militia.



**So, what's printed on the other side?**

Let's take a look at the printed circular and more importantly, what it represents.

The following extract from "THE DECLINE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA MILITIA 1815 – 1870", by Joseph J. Holmes, provides the background for this circular and what it represents:

*"While it is generally known that most of the original thirteen colonies promptly founded militias for protection against hostile Indians and rival colonial powers, many do not realize that two separate and highly different militia systems, one compulsory and the other voluntary, existed side by side in most colonies from an early date. Nor is there much understanding of the evolution of these two militias in the antebellum years. Few fully appreciated that by 1850 the compulsory militia had declined to the point where it was little more than a vehicle for "registering men eligible for military service and that the volunteers had come to more closely resemble a men's social club than a bona fide military organization."*

To *Henry Borby* Collector of *Heidelberg* Township.

DEAR SIR:—The better to enable you to perform the duties devolving upon you as Collector of your township, relative to the Collection of Militia Fines, I would beg leave to call your attention to the following sections relating more particularly to your duties, taken from the "Act to revise the militia system," &c., passed at the Legislative session of 1849.

Respectfully yours,

LEBANON,

*July 25. 1850*

*H. E. Combs* Brigade Inspector.

SECTION 1 That it shall be the duty of every free able bodied white male person, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years, who has resided in this commonwealth for one month, to provide himself with such uniform as may be considered a proper uniform for a volunteer company, which shall in all cases be a substantial uniform, fit for service.

SECTION 2. That the persons thus uniformed, shall form themselves into companies of not less than thirty rank and file, and elect their own officers, make their own by-laws, regulate, collect, and apply their own fines and forfeitures.

SECTION 6. That it shall be the duty of the assessor of each township, ward or borough, to furnish a list to the county commissioners of all male persons residing in said township, ward or borough, between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five years, for which he shall receive as a full compensation, one cent per person. Provided, That the assessors shall not return on their said lists, any persons who they shall know to hold such certificates as are recognized in the eighth section of this act, and all aforesaid persons who are not uniformed and enrolled as aforesaid, shall be considered as delinquent militia men, and subject to a fine of fifty cents for each year that such delinquent remains ununiformed and unenrolled as aforesaid.

SECTION 8. That it shall be the duty of the county commissioners, in making out the duplicate for the collection of state taxes, in each and every year, having received the rolls of the captains, and lists of the assessors, and ascertained the delinquent militia men within their respective counties, to add said fine of fifty cents to the amount of state tax of each aforesaid delinquent, to be collected with the same, under the same authority, and in all respects as authorized in the case of collection of county rates and levies; and said commissioners shall keep a book in which shall be entered the amount of fines of delinquents ascertained as aforesaid, which, after deducting exonerations, in accordance with the eighth section of this act, shall be a separate military fund, the collector being allowed out of said fund the same per cent. as for collecting other taxes, and any books and stationery, as well as the time of the commissioners necessarily occupied in military business, to be paid out of said fund.

SECTION 9 That in case there be any person named in said warrant who could not be found, or from whom it was impracticable to collect said fine or fines, it shall be lawful for the county commissioners to administer an oath to the collector, that he made diligent search, and no such person could be found in his bounds, or that any such fine ought not to be, or could not be collected, together with all legal certificates, which certificates shall be of service as a volunteer or commissioned officer, for any seven years before, or any five years after the passage of this act, or a certificate of a sworn surgeon of a regiment, or to practising physicians, under oath, that such persons are not capable of performing military duty, the said commissioners shall give the said collector a credit order, which shall be an ample voucher for said collector in the settlement of his military account with the county treasurer.

SECTION 16. That every person who shall have been uniformed and enrolled, and faithfully served as a member of any volunteer company or companies for five successive years after the passage of this act, the evidence of which shall be a certificate, taken from the book of the company or companies to which he may have belonged during said five years, signed by the captain or captains in command at the time of giving said certificate, shall forever thereafter be exempted from military duty, except in time of invasion, insurrection or actual war.

*N. B.*

*I received a circular from Head quarters stating that the militia tax must be settled on or before the first Monday of September next,*

*Yours &c,*

*H. E. Combs*



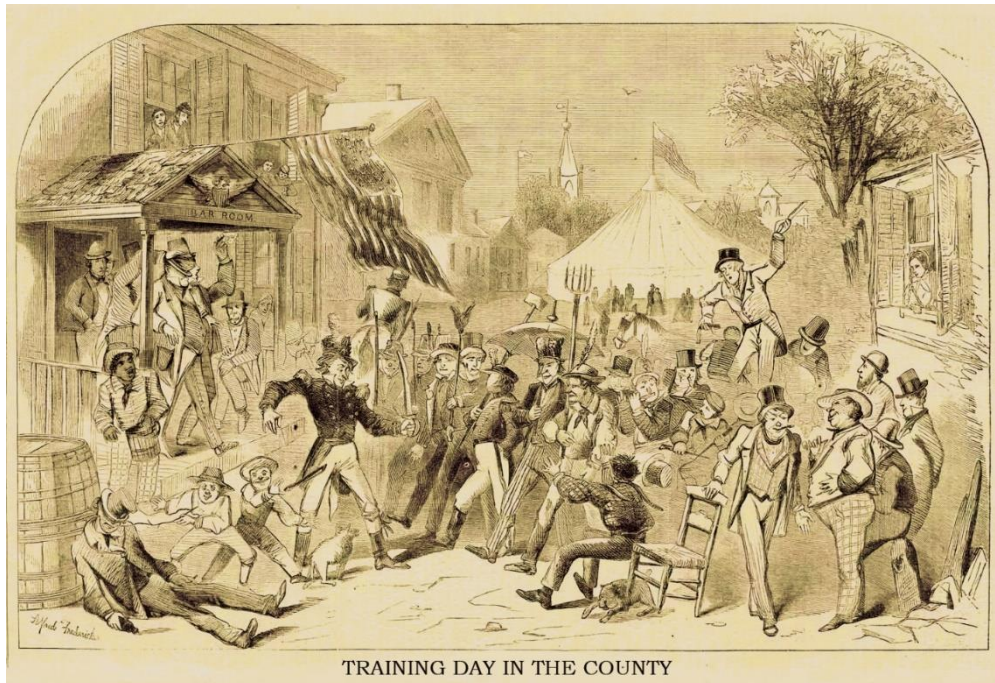
Benjamin Franklin formed Pennsylvania's first twelve-hundred-man all-volunteer militia in 1747. He recruited and trained his volunteers, the "Associators," without official sanction or financial support. Neighboring colonies lent fifteen cannons, and a lottery allowed him to purchase additional fortifications for Philadelphia.

Official approbation for Franklin's volunteers did not materialize until the Pennsylvania Assembly passed the Militia Act of 1755. This measure legalized a military force composed of those willing to unite for military purposes within the province. Thus, the Pennsylvania Militia began as a wholly volunteer organization, a situation in which it again found itself by 1850.

The Pennsylvania Militia was organized under an Act of the Assembly of March 17, 1777. It required compulsory enrollment by constables of all able-bodied white males between the ages of 18 and 53 to repel invaders. Those who did not comply were fined. The law prescribed prison terms for nonpayment of fines, but by the late 1840s, the state had given up all thought of imposing such penalties.

The history of Pennsylvania's compulsory militia between 1792 and 1858 was one of neglect. As early as 1802, enrollees failed to appear for training. High-ranking officers established guidelines that divided authority and contradicted training directives.

*"Annual training days soon came to be little more than family outings, "a semi-annual dose of war, gingerbread, and root beer." Gathered near some tavern in the Pennsylvania countryside, militiamen, dressed in everyday clothes and armed with an assortment of "broomsticks, canes, and a shotgun or two", would go through the mockery of an inspection. While this was in progress, the women prepared the picnic fare, and the children ran about screaming." (2)*



In 1849, a different type of fine for the encouragement of volunteers came into use. In 1852, Philadelphia imposed a tax of one dollar on all its residents who were eligible for compulsory military service but were not members of a compulsory or volunteer unit. Under the state law, the fine was set at fifty cents for all counties, except Philadelphia. The money realized was to be paid to volunteer units based on their organized strength.

This document sent by F. Embich, Brigade Inspector in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, to Henry Borkey, Esq., Collector of Heidelberg Township (Lebanon County), advising him how to better “perform the duties devolving upon you as Collector of your township, relative to the collection of Militia Fines” taken from the Act to revise the militia system passed at the Legislative session in 1849. Note at the bottom Embich gives Borkey the deadline of September 2, 1850 (only 37 days) until all fines must be settled in his township.

References:

1. “American Stampless Cover Catalog,” Vol. 1, Fifth Ed. © 1997, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., No. Miami, FL, pp. 337
2. [www.journals.psu.edu](http://www.journals.psu.edu) THE DECLINE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA MILITIA 1815 – 1870, by Joseph J. Holmes, © 1974

*Editor’s note:* “Two Sides to Every Story” first appeared in this month’s Pennsylvania Postal History Society journal, *Pennsylvania Postal Historian*. Please join Hal and I at the PAPHS to receive the *Historian* every quarter! Visit the PAPHS website here: [Pennsylvania Postal History Society](http://PennsylvaniaPostalHistorySociety)



***Gosh, we've been around for a long time!***

Last month, we read an early account of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club from early 1933. The next item I was able to find about the club in the files of the *Lebanon Daily News* on Newspapers.com was this item from Thursday, November 15, 1934:



Stamp collectors – there are vastly more of them than most people imagine – are having their inning this week at the second annual exhibit of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors' Club and Aero-Philatelic Society. The exhibition is in progress at the American Legion Home on South Ninth Street and will continue until Saturday night at 10 o'clock.

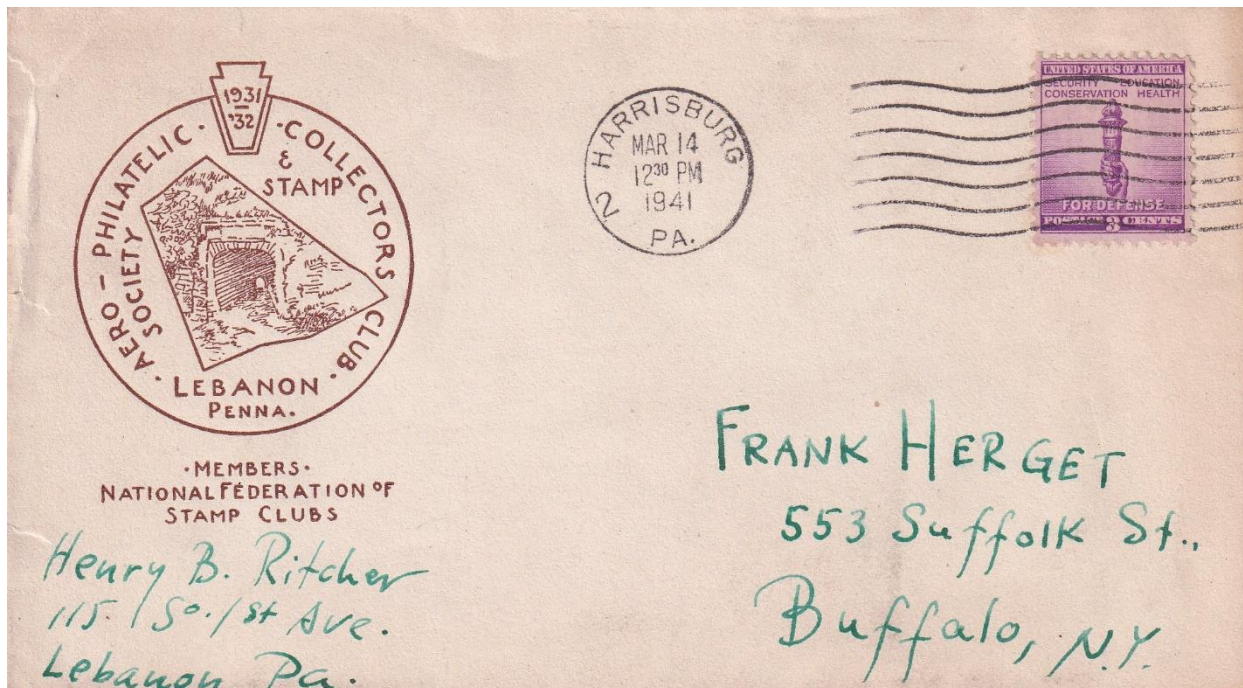
The display is of great interest to professional philatelists and it has many features of general public interest. It is educational to those directly engaged in stamp collecting, and is highly interesting to even casual visitors for there are elements to it that offer irresistible attraction.

In the exhibit are the immense collections of Henry T. Richter, Walter Spillman, D. E. Schucker, Phillip H. Seltzer, F. J. Kirschoff and smaller ones by Leroy Hain, J. H. Wirt, Paul E. Miller, and others.

The stamps are displayed in glass covered frames, and on cards covered with cellophane, and exhibited on long tables. They are grouped into sections and classified in such a manner that they can be readily inspected. The display includes envelopes and postage stamps that traveled from Uncle Sam's new domain, "Little America," and from different countries in Europe. There are stamps gathered in one frame that give an historic sketch of the airship U. S. S. Macon.

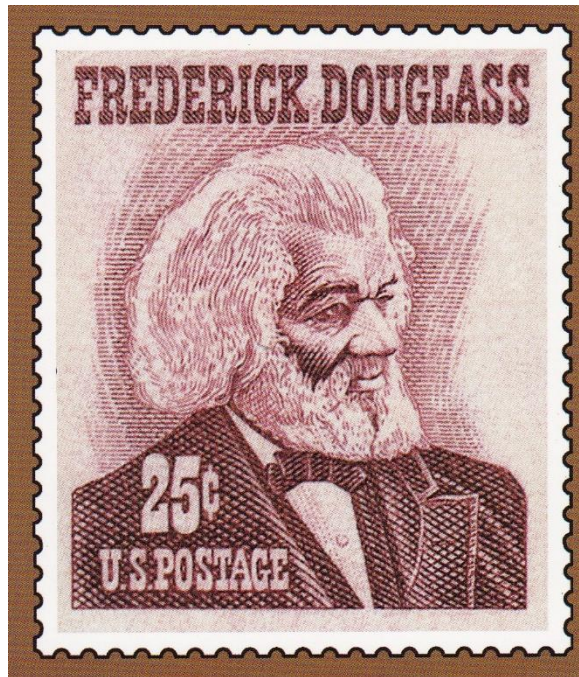
There was an immense throng at the exhibition on the opening night, Wednesday, and included a large delegation from Reading. That philetology is no mere city fad was attested by the large number of visitors from the country districts, and by intimate knowledge these rural visitors had of the displays. There are, of course, many internal revenue and other styles of stamps in display and it is well worth while seeing. The stamp collectors consider their work educational and no admission charge is made to inspect the exhibit.

It is reported that there are over a million stamp collectors in the nation who can be classified as professionals, to say nothing of those commercially engaged in it as a business, and many who just work at it by spells. Lebanon County apparently has a considerable number which includes some in each classification.





Did you know . . .



Frederick Douglass, one of the greatest orators the United States has ever produced, spoke to an audience in Lebanon? The year was 1867, and the topic of his speech was [\*Sources of Danger to the Republic\*](#).

I have participated in two local readings of Mr. Douglass' pre-Civil War address, *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?*, and he has become one of my favorite historical figures. I have learned a lot about him in the past few years, but I had no idea he ever visited Lebanon until this month, when LebTown publisher Davis Shaver [wrote a short piece about the event](#).

Douglass delivered his oration in the old Courthouse at 8<sup>th</sup> and Cumberland Streets. The event was remembered almost 30 years later in the *Lebanon Daily News*, in 1895. At least one contemporary account of the event from the *Lebanon Courier* exists; but the *Lebanon Daily News* didn't begin publication until 1872, and the year 1867 is currently a desert for Lebanon County news in the archives that are accessible on newspapers.com. I encourage you to check out Mr. Shaver's full account on [LebTown](#), linked above. – Scott Ney

### **Are you interested in attending the Boston Expo in 2026?**

Attention collectors in Lebanon, Reading, Lancaster, and other points in Central Pennsylvania: if you are interested in attending the World Stamp Expo in Boston next year, please see the following message from David Silcox. While the show is still over a year away, preparations

need to be made now! If you are interested in the proposal, please contact Dave at [silx404@aol.com](mailto:silx404@aol.com). Dave needs a headcount by February 28 . . .

Dear fellow collectors,

We are planning a bus trip to the Boston 2026 World Expo. We will be going to the Boston 2026 show for two days (May 23 and 24th) which means we'll need lodging for three nights. Departure will be May 22nd. The official room rate is \$279.95 per night within walking distance of the Boston Convention Center. Two or more people can split a room. White Star tours is going to provide a quote on a bus with insurance in late spring of 2025. The max bus load would be 50 people with a min of 40. The bus would make a stop in Allentown to pick up their people.

The cost per person should be around \$600 plus meals, assuming that two people share a room, and the bus cost is in the vicinity of \$200 per person. We need a head count of people interested by the end of February 2025 to determine if we have a chance of getting a minimum of 40 people.

The show's hotels will start taking reservations in June of 2025. One night must be paid at the time of reservation. Plus, we will be collecting for the bus reservation at that time.

Thanks,

Dave Silcox

[Boston 2026 World Stamp Show, Inc. – The Twelfth International Philatelic Exhibition of the United States](#)

## Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club Calendar

**Please contact the editor if you are interested in presenting at one of our monthly meetings.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Presenter and Subject</b>
February 18, 2025	Basics of Stamp Collecting – Dick Colberg
March 18, 2025	
April 15, 2025	
May 20, 2025	
June 17, 2025	
July 15, 2025	
August 19, 2025	Civil War Pension Philately – Scott Ney
September 16, 2025	
October 21, 2025	
November 18, 2025	
December 16, 2025	Holiday Dinner at The Rotunda Restaurant and Pub

**The Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club thanks the Philatelic Society of Lancaster County for hosting our affiliate page, which is accessible by clicking the following link:**

[The Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club – Philatelic Society of Lancaster County \(lcps-stamps.org\)](http://lcps-stamps.org)

**The PSLC Events Calendar is located at the following link:**

[Philatelic Society of Lancaster County – Award-winning, non-profit community organization dedicated to promoting stamp and postal history collecting as a hobby for education and fun. \(lcps-stamps.org\)](http://lcps-stamps.org)



**The Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club Lebanon, PA 17042 – 17046**



# The Overprint

## **Newsletter of the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club**

Meetings held at Calvary Lutheran Church,  
1009 Elizabeth Avenue in Laureldale.  
Elizabeth Avenue crosses Kutztown Road in the Muhlenberg Township area.  
(About a mile north of Rt 222 )

**Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
(doors open around 6:30 for pre meeting social time)**

**We're Back!!**

**2025: MEETING REBOOT**

**TUESDAY March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**TOPIC: "It's a Rum Tale"**

**Presented by Mike Bach**

**Come hear a short presentation about Rum and the  
British Navy**

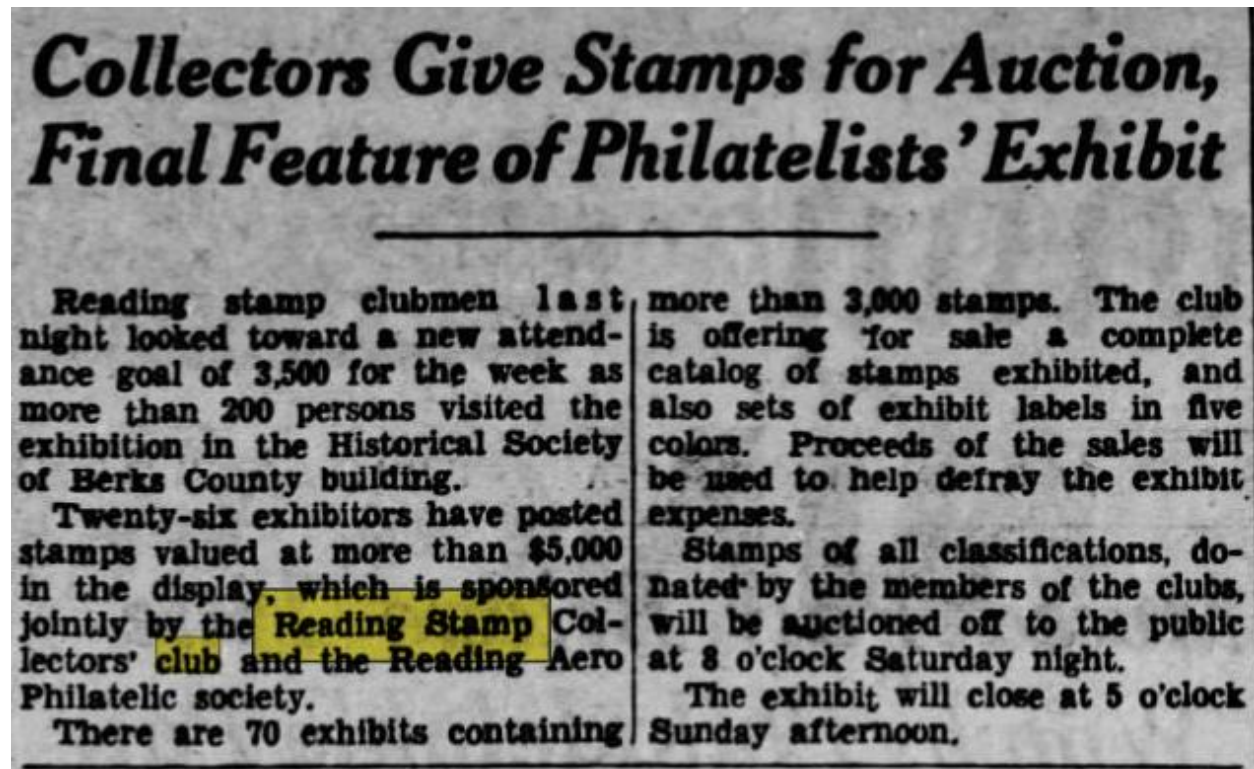
and see a cover for the last day rum was issued.

If you come you might have a rum surprise

We also need members to bring a special cover that they would like to share.

*Hey, we've been around for quite a long time, too!*

The month before the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club visited their friends in Lebanon for their aforementioned exhibit at the Lebanon American Legion, we had our own:



**Collectors Give Stamps for Auction,  
Final Feature of Philatelists' Exhibit**

Reading stamp clubmen last night looked toward a new attendance goal of 3,500 for the week as more than 200 persons visited the exhibition in the Historical Society of Berks County building.

Twenty-six exhibitors have posted stamps valued at more than \$5,000 in the display, which is sponsored jointly by the Reading Stamp Collectors' club and the Reading Aero Philatelic society.

There are 70 exhibits containing more than 3,000 stamps. The club is offering for sale a complete catalog of stamps exhibited, and also sets of exhibit labels in five colors. Proceeds of the sales will be used to help defray the exhibit expenses.

Stamps of all classifications, donated by the members of the clubs, will be auctioned off to the public at 8 o'clock Saturday night.

The exhibit will close at 5 o'clock Sunday afternoon.

This account was found in the Reading Times on Friday Morning, October 12, 1934. Mike will be back next month with more RSCC history!

Reading Stamp Collectors Club – Reading, PA