



The Masonic Philatelist

VOL. 25

JANUARY 1969

NO. 5

Four 6-Cent Beautification Stamps To Be Issued January 16, 1969



The Beautification of America is the subject of four commemorative stamps to be issued on January 16 at Washington, D. C., according to the Postmaster General W. Marvin Watson.

Four different inscriptions appear across the bottom of the horizontal stamps: "Plant for more beautiful cities," "Plant for more beautiful parks," "Plant for more beautiful highways," and "Plant for more beautiful streets."

The Cities stamp shows a small triangle planted in pink and red azaleas and ivory tulips at 3rd and Pennsylvania Ave., with the Capitol in the background.

To the right of the Cities stamp on the pane is the Parks stamp. This shows a field of daffodils on the Potomac River, with the Washington Monument in the background. Here one million daffodils and 2,700 dogwood trees have been planted.

Appearing on the pane beneath the Cities stamp is the Highways stamp, in which yellow poppies and blue lupine predominate.

To the right of the Highways stamp on the pane is the Streets stamp which shows crabapple in bloom on a tree-lined street.

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Published by

The Ralph A. Barry - Al Van Dahl
PUBLICATION FUND

of Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.
22 East 35th St., New York, N. Y. 10016

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By the sign of the Gavel

The A.S.D.A. Show was a success as far as we are concerned. We met many old friends and got acquainted with new ones. I want to take this opportunity to thank our numerous members who manned the lounge during the three days of the exhibit. They worked very hard extending the fraternal hand of good fellowship.

I am very sorry we did not send tickets to our members in the metropolitan area, but we had no control over the situation. The lounge was always a beehive, full of activity.

I hope that you and your loved ones

★ MEETINGS ★

First Friday of each month
Collectors Club Building
22 East 35th Street, N. Y. C.

spend the Holiday Season in good cheer and good health.

Your editor, Dudley Hilborn is in need of material for our little magazine. Please help Dudley. He needs you.

Joseph Munk

HENRY FORD, 33°

Born, Dearborn, Mich., July 30, 1863
Died, Dearborn, Mich., April 7, 1947

Our Illustrious Brother Ford spent practically his entire life within an area of short radius and yet his life influenced the entire world to a great extent. His father was born of English stock, in Ireland and settled down on a farm in Dearborn, but the son Henry, who was born there was not destined for farm life—his whole passion was machinery and, at 16, he left the farm and went to Detroit where, 17 years later, he brought out his first car.

He was initiated in Masonry in Palestine Lodge in 1894, being raised to the Sublime Degree of Masonry on November 29 by a team made up largely of those with whom he worked, in overalls, at the Detroit Edison Company. On March 7, 1935 he was made a life member of the Lodge. Until 1940 he remained only a Master Mason, but, at its session in Cincinnati that year, our Supreme Council exercised its inherent prerogative and elected him to receive, within the Valley of Detroit, all the degrees of Scottish Rite, from the Fourth to and including the Thirty-third which was conferred upon him at a special session on the same evening when he had just received his Thirty-second Degree. Highest ranking Masonic leaders from the United States and Canada were in attendance to make it a most unique occasion.

For all the penalties that follow leadership and success, Ill. Bro. Henry Ford was truly a Mason; he was an eager student of Masonic philosophy and, though he never held office, he was active in his attendance until it became impossible for him to attend Lodge with any degree of privacy, his mere attendance distracting the attention of all from the ritual. At all times in his private life he exemplified the principles of Masonry and, no matter what criticism there might be of others, it was always said that "the old man" was on the square.

Reprinted From — *The Reader's Digest*

The Awful Truth About the U.S. Post Office

By James Nathan Miller

Let's begin this article with a supposition. Suppose somebody tried to sell you stock in a certain corporation, and when you investigated the company you discovered that:

- Most of its equipment was 30 to 100 years old, and it had no plans or funds for modernization.

- Its management was not allowed to deal with the unions in any important matters. Agreements on wages and hours were reached through a weird bargaining ritual in which the union's chief tactic was to put personal pressures on key members of the board of directors.

- The company's prices were set in much the same way—through pressures put on the board of directors by the people who buy the company's services.

- It was losing a billion dollars a year through sheer mismanagement and misdirection.

In view of these facts, you wouldn't, of course, want to own any of the company's stock. But the fact is that as a taxpayer you are already saddled with a share of it—for the "company" is the United States Post Office.

Last June, with the aid of five leading management-consulting and accounting firms, the prestigious Kappel Commission (appointed by the President and known by the name of its chairman, Frederick R. Kappel, former American Telephone and Telegraph Co. chairman) completed a searching look at our postal operation. Its report came to this general conclusion: The U.S. Post Office Department is run in violation of virtually every common-sense principle of modern management. Moreover, merely by putting its operation under normally efficient management, we could both take it off the taxpayers' backs (that is, wipe out its annual billion-dollar deficit) and give ourselves the finest in computer-

ized, mechanized, "customer-oriented" mail service.

Before looking at the commission's suggested remedy, let's observe some of the lengths to which the Post Office goes to defy the rules of common sense.

Who's the Boss? Two years ago, a Congressman in his Capitol Hill office pointed to the corridor outside and said to me, "If you want to see who really runs the U.S. Post Office, take a look out there."

It was postal-pay-bill time, and groups of postal workers from every Congressional district were visiting the legislators as part of week-long Washington "rallies" staged by the postal unions. Said the Congressman, "If I give them the wrong answers, I'll quickly hear from back home. Letter carriers are the only group who touch every home in my district."

The reason for such a rally is simple: Congress, not the Post Office Department, rules on all important labor matters—wages, hours, fringe benefits, etc. Even the duties of a post office janitor are spelled out in an act of Congress. As a result, the postal unions don't bargain collectively; they lobby. And their ties to a few key Congressmen make them among the most powerful lobbies in Washington. Here are some indications of results:

- The Post Office Department developed a work-measurement system to establish efficiency criteria for specific jobs. Whereupon Congress put pressure on the Post Offices to reduce the use of the measurements to grade the work of individual employees, no matter how grossly incompetent they might be.

- Three years ago, when Congress passed the so-called 55-30 rule (allowing workers to retire with full benefits at age 55 after 30 years of service) management requested that it be given authority to force retirement of below-par workers (in the upper grades only)

on the same basis. Under union pressure, Congress refused.

● The Post Office estimates that it could save up to \$75 million a year merely by paying rural-route carriers according to time worked instead of length of route, and by providing them with rental cars instead of paying them 12¢ a mile for the use of their own vehicles. But the rural carriers' union objects, and the idea has never made any headway in Congress.

Why Be Ambitious? One of the basic facts of life in working for the Post Office is the knowledge that doing an outstanding job will get you nowhere. In fact, some personnel policies actually offer what the Kappel Commission calls "negative incentives" to doing a good job. For instance:

● At one point in the San Francisco post office, 120 supervisory jobs were unfilled because of a lack of applicants from the lower ranks. The reason: though promotion meant larger responsibilities, it also meant giving up all seniority rights and starting at the bottom of the supervisory ladder (probably on the night shift) in return for a wage raise of less than \$500 a year.

● Postmasters' salaries are determined solely by the size of post office and length of service. If a postmaster does a bad job, he won't be fired (the appointment is permanent to age 70) except for the grossest malfeasance. If he does a good job, it can't earn him a promotion. He already holds the top spot in his office, and by law he can't be transferred to another office.

Says Timothy May, Post Office general counsel, "Private industry moves good men up through the ranks from branch office to branch office. We're legally forbidden to."

In fact, in career terms there is no overall postal system—just a collection of 33,000 isolated career islands, the local post offices. This is because of a weird seniority system which does not work system-wide. If a worker from one post office moves to another, he has to start at the bottom of the seniority ladder in the new office, regardless of his length of service. As a result, 99 percent of postal workers never transfer out of the office they start in.

● Even for the few promotions that do exist, the rigidity of civil-service and seniority rules virtually eliminates the concept of advancement for merit. "If the postmaster had complete authority for putting the right man in the right

spot," a top official of a big-city post office told me, "our problems would disappear tomorrow." He cited the case of a supervisor with high seniority and civil-service exam marks who was nonetheless "lousing up the whole operation" by his failure to finish sorting in time to meet critical truck departures. "To get rid of him could take six months to a year," the official said. "First 'counseling' with him, then waiting out his appeals, and all the while fighting pressure from the union and probably his Congressman."

Two dreary statistics sum up how much incentive there is: over 80 percent of postal employees end their careers in the same job they started with; and, according to E. C. Hallbeck, head of the United Federation of Postal Clerks, a sorting clerk may work the night shift for up to 15 years—almost half his career—before he has enough seniority just to get a day job.

19th-Century Pigeonholes. Any well-managed company conducts a continuing, planned program of capital investment, each year borrowing or setting aside earnings to buy the new machines and factories that will keep it abreast of modern technology and growth.

There is no such program in the Post Office. In April 1967, the then Postmaster General, Lawrence O'Brien, estimated that the department would need five billion dollars to catch up with 20th-century technology. But Congress—which controls the postal budget as tightly as its labor relations—is much more interested in voting funds for the more glamorous military and space projects, and for such politically powerful items as new highways. At the estimated rate of appropriations for modernization from 1968 to 1972 (about \$250 million a year), financing the improvements that O'Brien believed were needed would take 20 years.

The result is that the department's physical plant today is a shambles of ancient machinery and overcrowded buildings. Two years ago, in Chicago, an unexpected jump from 18 million to 21 million daily pieces so overloaded the post office that the whole operation broke down (the second crisis in three years), and mail had to be sent as far away as St. Louis for sorting.

Modern equipment could increase capacity. For example, a remarkably efficient, electrical-mechanical mail sorter has been developed in which a conveyor streams letters past several clerks, who press keyboard buttons to route the letters to their proper pigeonholes. They reduce the cost of sorting

1000 letters from \$4.20 to \$3.42. The Commission says that these machines could pay for themselves in about two years. But they cost \$130,000 apiece, and the Post Office has bought only about one third of the machines it needs. Thus the overwhelming bulk of mail is still sorted precisely as it was 150 years ago—by clerks on high stools who grab a handful of envelopes and throw them one by one into pigeon-holes. (In Chicago, 6000 such clerks throw letters into seven miles of pigeon-holes.)

And so it goes with virtually every new technique developed for moving materials more efficiently. One startling statistic tells the story: over the last ten years, productivity of the average postal worker has increased only .23 percent a year—one-sixteenth the overall U.S. industry average of 3.62 per cent.

How Much to Pay? The Post Office is the only major organization in the country today, either publicly or privately owned, whose prices are set by Congress. All other monopoly rates—for electricity, gas, telephones, railroads, airplanes—are set by regulatory commissions, whose staffs of economists and accountants recommend rate changes only after detailed hearings and painstaking audits. Compared to this fact-finding process, postal rate-making is a circus sideshow.

Congress does not have, the Kappel Commission learned, a single person on its staff who studies postal rates full-time. Instead of providing expertise, Congressional rate hearings simply befog the complex economic issues involved. Scores of company executives and lobbyists appear at these hearings, each with his own set of self-serving statistics. Says Rep. Morris Udall, a member of the House postal committee, "The witnesses bring their own accountants, and there's hardly one who can't prove he's paying more postage than it costs the Post Office to handle his mail."

Indeed, both the rates and the postal accounting system are so chaotic that nobody can say for sure what mailers are being subsidized, or how much. (The accounting system doesn't even tell how much it costs to run the Chicago post office!) Said the commission, in its discussion of rates for different classes of mail, "Some items within these classes undoubtedly do not pay their way, while others do. One cannot tell which are which."

Big business-mails—publishers, advertisers, mail-order houses—have every right to be heard on postal mat-

ters. Business is by far the biggest mailer (only 13 percent of total mail volume is personal letters), and seemingly small postal-rate increases can cost some corporations many millions of dollars. But a legislature is simply the wrong body to get involved in the pressures and technicalities of rate-making. That's why state legislatures long ago handed over most utility rates to independent commissions, and why Congress in 1930 set up an independent Tariff Commission. "Legislative rate-making," says the Kappel report, "is a hundred years behind the times."

To Have Efficient Mails. That, then is our governmental stepchild, the Post Office. Here is what the Kappel Commission recommended to cure its ailments:

- First, create an entirely new management structure for the Post Office—making it a government-owned corporation with its board of directors mostly appointed by the President, along the lines of the Tennessee Valley Authority or the Export-Import Bank.

- Second, give the corporation the authority to manage its own operations. Let it borrow capital funds from the investing public, independent of the Congressional-appropriation treadmill. Let it set its own rates, after hearings by expert rate examiners and subject to veto by Congress, so that, overall, it will pay its own way. Let it bargain collectively with the unions, and give it the authority to hire, to fire, and to establish personnel policies on the basis of merit, with politics eliminated.

While important details of the commission's recommendations are subject to legitimate debate, there's little question that the basic idea—freeing the Post Office of Congressional politicking—is essential if we are ever to have efficient mails.

Is such sweeping reform possible? Only if we taxpayers and mail users want it badly enough to put heavy pressure behind it. So write to your Congressman—forcefully and frequently. After all, letters are what the U.S. mails are for.

SEEKS MATERIAL

Sgm. Stewart N. L. Pollard
Box 11 Arsec. (g3) Maag
A.P.O. San Francisco 96263

would like stories about Masonic Humor. He is writing a book on the subject.

The Disease of Philately and Their Treatment (Continued)

The most important symptom is the appearance. Does the patient appear to be engraved and printed by the same hands that are known to have printed the genuine stamps? An accumulation of a thousand common stamps showing the different styles of engraving and different types of work of printers is an inexpensive form of education for any collector. An engraved or recess-printed stamp should show the raised lines of engraving. The typographed or surface-printed stamp should show signs of typographic bite. The lithographed stamps show neither of these signs but usually a fine soft impression. The photogravure stamp will show "the screen" even under low magnification.

So the primary tests are

1. Does the patient look well? If it is tired in appearance then something may well be wrong.
2. Is the patient printed by the right method on the right paper with the right watermark and right perforation (Remember that the last three are not in themselves a test of a Sperati forgery).

Most stamps should be held against a light and looked through. Comparison with a known genuine stamp will soon show if there is any strange appearance—the first symptom of disease. This test is invaluable when comparing surcharged or overprinted stamps.

Another simple test is to get the light reflected from the surface of a stamp, for if there has been any clever surface of a stamp, for if there has been any clever surgery the scar will almost certainly show.

The use of benzene and a watermark

detector will often show up any difference in paper texture which is caused by a thinning filled or a repair closed.

A mercury vapour lamp is useful providing one is willing to experiment and learn how its reactions can aid one's knowledge.

Look at your stamps with open eyes, compare them with their neighbours and thoroughly examine anything that appears abnormal. Every craftsman has his particular style whether he be designer, engraver, printer or paper-maker and it is an extraordinary forger who can successfully imitate the style of the three and probably four different craftsmen whose combined styles created a postage stamp.

There is the other criminal disease of stealing someone else's stamps, either by outright theft or by the substitution of a stamp of lesser value for one of greater. This is a disease, for I can't believe that the possession of anything acquired in this way can do otherwise than rob the thief of the pleasures of the hobby. I exclude the professional thief from this comment although I possess a letter from a convicted thief in which he apologised, not for stealing stamps, but for having destroyed the pleasure of the owner.

Stamp robberies have greatly increased since 1950, so have insurance premiums, and somewhere there must be an efficient fence whose skill in marketing stolen stamps is remarkable. One day he will make a mistake for this is in the way of nature and one of the laws of compensation.

Now let us turn to the last group of the diseases of philately.

THE PERSONAL

Here is something that affects all mortals, those deadly sins which affect the hobby.

To some extent all of us are affected by GREED and this instinct has to be kept under strict control if one is to be a happy collector. Perhaps I can best describe this aspect of one's collecting life by telling you how I have tried to curb my own greed.

All of us love to buy a bargain and of course this is an instinct on which those who sell forgeries and fakes thrive. Have you ever heard the seller say "This looks good to me but I do not

know if it is genuine? If it is, then it is worth £100. If you take a chance I will sell it for £10". If this is the sort of gamble that you like then it is a thousand to one that you are £10 out of pocket.

However, the specialist may well have the knowledge that enables him to buy for a few shillings something that is worth as many pounds to him. He is entitled to his bargain and his ego is thereby inflated. This is a double profit which satisfies our baser instincts. I try and restore the balance by either buying more stamps from the

seller that are not bargains and thanking him warmly for having given me the opportunity of acquiring something that gives me pleasure. If it has been a case of just one item bought, then I like to give him a present that will provide him with as much pleasure as his sale has given me. The bargains I get when buying at auction must balance the bad buys and unless an item is flagrantly misdescribed or faked I try never to return an auction lot.

HOARDING is often confused with collecting. All possession is temporary at the best and one is only the guardian of the treasure for the period of one's life. The stamp collector will want to fill the empty spaces but, except for the purpose of exchange, duplicates are not needed. The philatelist may well accumulate quantities in order to make his study but having made it, surplus stamps become duplicates.

There is no merit in quantity, only a form of miserliness and greed, and if you agree that our hobby brings us pleasure and happiness then I can see no moral right in the possession of duplication which would give others pleasure and happiness to own.

Many years ago, Charles Jewell said to me on occasion **"It is time that we had another pride's purge"** and he would scrutinize his collection carefully and remove all those pages which he no longer wanted. Influenced by this excellent practice I have tried to review all my philatelic possessions every Christmas week and remove whatever I have not looked at or shown during the past year. In this way the collection remains a convenient size in spite of frequent additions. Whether the items removed are sold or given to someone else who will enjoy them is immaterial.

There is some sort of moral right of ownership and I have never regretted giving to another collector something that will aid his studies. If it is something which particularly interests me then I mount a photograph in place of the original.

ENVY of someone else's possession is something I confess to having felt in the past, but this disease I have cured by asking if I can take a photograph of the loved one I want. This, duly mounted and written-up in my own collection with the footnote **"The original of this photograph is in the John Smith collection,"** pleases John Smith, and the photograph, usually in colour, certainly pleases me.

There are some philatelists who would consider it a disease to cut up a multiple piece, thus destroying some

philatelic evidence. However, providing the item is properly photographed and studied before cutting, there must be a moral right in severing a block of twenty-four into six blocks so that five more collectors may enjoy possession. You can say that it should have been cut into twenty-four singles for the same reason but this is a question that can only be answered by knowledge of the supply available and the demand.

Another disease which affects all collectors is SELFISHNESS and this may be seen in many forms.

Stamp exhibitions are popular both with collectors and with the visiting public. The motives for exhibiting vary. It can be the desire to give pleasure to others who share your particular interest, and through exhibiting I have met many collectors who have been able to add to my own knowledge, often correcting a false theory which has been advanced in a moment of misguided enthusiasm and ignorance. Others who enter for competition are often anxious to know what the jury, with whose decisions usually only the gold-medallists agree, think of their treasures. Others only enter if they are morally certain that they will win a top award. However, the majority enter for the pleasure they will give to others and the pleasure they receive. I believe that the day will come when an international exhibition will be held that is non-competitive.

Occasionally I meet collectors who boast **"I never show my stamps to anyone."** Possibly they have nothing worth showing and by **"worth"** I mean **"interest"** and not **"value"**. Often such philatelic misers are influenced by the fact that someone may learn something from their studies and this may increase competition in the stamp market. Others do not want to attract the attention of the Inland Revenue Department to their riches or excite the thief to robbery. These are some of the forms of philatelic selfishness.

Another form is the donation of valuable stamp collections to philatelic institutions and museums. Unless there is a substantial sum of money given to preserve and present the collection in a manner which will continually interest the visitor, and unless there is a knowledgeable curator whose enthusiasm will breathe life into the exhibit, then the collection will be of no more service than if it was buried with the late owner. It is probably an understatement to say that £25,000,000 sterling is the value of postage stamps at today's prices which are so buried. The

names of the donors are forgotten, the pleasures to hundreds of thousands of people living and unborn is diminished, and the treasures not only rot but they prove an unwanted burden to the custodians.

Ours is a very personal hobby. We like to collect in our own style and to make our own discoveries and mistakes. True collecting is one of the few real freedoms left to the human race and no one has the moral right to deny any of this freedom to future generations.

There is one other form in which this philatelic disease of selfishness is prevalent and that is in the family relationship. One of the most famous collectors that the world has ever known barred access to the room in which he kept his collection to his wife and every other member of his family. He was a great man and his wife was a large-hearted and intelligent lady, and she realized that in this locked room he kept his beloved mistress, Lady Philately. In the company of the latter he found complete relaxation and relief from the burdens of his considerable duty.

However, his children did not possess the same degree of understanding as their mother and were more or less jealous of their father's hidden companion. In his twenties, one of the sons sought to get nearer his father by taking up the hobby. He showed his father auction catalogues from time-to-time and sought his experienced advice on the desirability of a stamp that appealed to him. The father always gave his son an honest opinion but for several years the boy did not succeed in buying any of these stamps. Later he discovered that the same man always bought the stamps above his bid and on making a discreet enquiry, he unhappily discovered that the buyer was his father's agent. The boy sold his collection to me, determined never to collect stamps again, and as the years passed father and son drifted further and further apart. One can only presume that the father was jealous that the son might learn to share the same amorata.

The fact that so few children find the same interest in the hobby as their parent is suggestive that the latter has

sometimes overlooked opportunities for giving their children the same chance of pleasure through life.

The first experience I had of philatelic interference with marital relationship was in 1922 when a young wife of a customer who was constantly calling on me to buy stamps, reviled me as a snake in the grass who came between her and her husband. More than somewhat shaken I debated with myself on the moral implied. I sought the views of wives of other collectors and found to my surprise that most of them actively resented their husband's hobby, one even suggesting that, as her husband stayed up so late playing with his stamps, it was a form of family limitation. Even the more tolerant took the somewhat cynical view that it was only just better than "**blondes or booze**".

Times have changed, and today many collectors take their wives to philatelic conferences and exhibitions, and although few of them appreciate the finer points of the hobby, they are content to share the interest of their spouses and to exchange confidences on this childish weakness with their fellow "**stamp-widows**".

I will not, because I cannot, speak for the feminine of the species, but I would urge all married male collectors to find the weekly piece of news about your own discoveries which can interest your family. Whenever you are having a stamp session on your own, interrupt your profound concentration by showing your wife three copies of the same stamp and ask her which is the bright cobalt and which is the dull ultramarine. Her colour sense may not be better than yours but in any case she will be pleased to have been asked for her opinion. If you share it, say so with sincerity. If you do not, thank her equally warmly for her valuable advice.

Remember that our hobby brings companionship to the lonely, adventure to the adventurer, consolation and forgetfulness to the bereaved, relaxation to the busy mind and the antidote of "being out of it" for those who have retired from their professional life. This is a hobby of happiness and not the amassing of dirty little pieces of paper that others have spat on.

It was Goethe who wrote:

"COLLECTORS ARE A HAPPY PEOPLE"

—ROBSON LOWE