



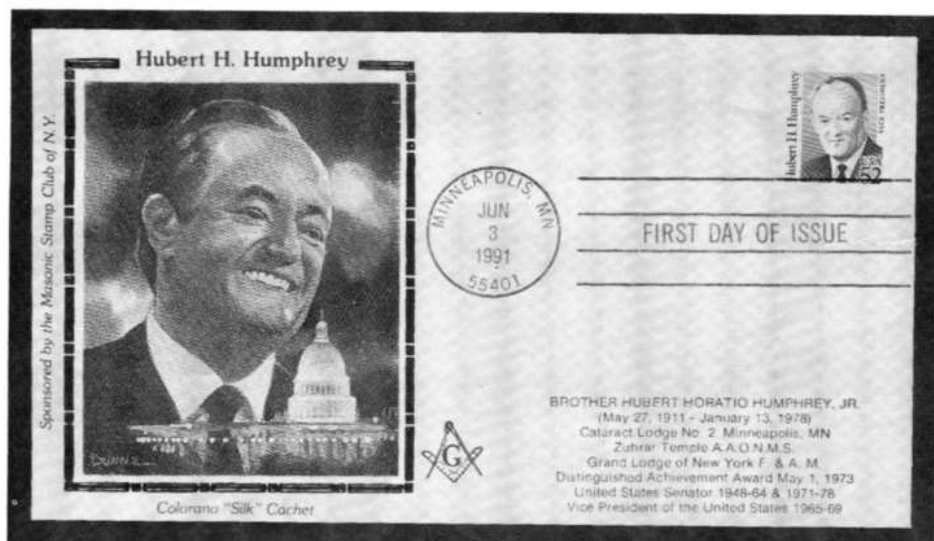
The Masonic Philatelist

A QUARTERLY

VOL. 47

DECEMBER 1991

NO. 4



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The MASONIC PHILATELIST

VOL. 47

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DECEMBER 1991

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The Masonic Stamp Club of New York was organized in 1934 for the purpose of encouraging research and study in Masonic Philately, and to establish bonds of good fellowship among Masons who are stamp collectors. The need for the organization has proved itself through the years with its ever-increasing membership and the formation of other Masonic stamp clubs in the United States.

The Editor invites all members to submit items of information and articles on the subject of Masonic Philately. Typewritten copy and/or camera ready items will result in the best possible presentation of your material if it is selected for use.

ON THE COVER

Hubert Horatio Humphrey, Jr. (1911-1978) was raised in Cataract Lodge No. 2, in Minneapolis, Minnesota on December 18, 1946. He later became a member of the York Rite bodies and Zuhrrar Shrine Temple.

In June 1973 Brother Humphrey received the Distinguished Achievement Medal of the Grand Lodge of New York. He stated: "I am mindful of the philosophy of Freemasonry, and it is a philosophy that means very much to me in my life - the philosophy of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. I am proud to belong to a great fraternal organization that does think of family, of country, of community, of service and the spiritual value of principles."



Regular meetings, 2:00 p.m., 2nd Wednesday each month except July and August at:

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My Hobby Is Philately

by Herman "Pat" Herst, Jr.

King Solomon Beethoven Lodge No. 232 NYC

While philately is probably the world's most popular hobby not only dollarwise but in number of adherents, it is a comparatively new hobby compared to many. Postage stamps were not invented until 1840, when Rowland Hill convinced the English Parliament that if the Post Office, then losing money, reduced its rates to one-twelfth of the price it then charges, it would make more money.

Until 1840 the recipients of letters, not the senders, paid the postage for carrying them, both in the United States and abroad. This system was fine while only the wealthy possessed the ability to read and write, but as education was extended to the masses -- and to the poor -- more and more people began to send letters to those who simply did not have the money to accept them. Hill wisely concluded that if a system of pre-payment could be devised, the Post Office would be assured its fee before the letter would be delivered.

A bit of gummed paper, called a "label" by Rowland Hill was the device he came up with. On May 6, 1840, a black label (now called a stamp) portraying the classic

features of Queen Victoria, then a young girl, was placed on sale throughout the British Isles.

Other nations watched the experiment with interest. They too were having trouble keeping the Post Office in the black. The astounding success of the Hill scheme (he subsequently became Sir Rowland Hill for his innovation) induced other nations to follow suit. Switzerland followed in 1843. Brazil became the first Western Hemisphere nation to issue stamps, also in 1843. The United States went ahead with its plans cautiously. Even then we were a large country, and the Post Office did not know how well Americans would take to such a radical idea as paying the postage on a letter beforehand.

Stamps were issued experimentally in several of our cities; New York, New Haven and St. Louis in 1845; Annapolis, Md. and Alexandria, Va. in 1846, among others. Many of these are today extremely rare; none are common. Prices well into five figures -- dollars -- are paid frequently for the rarer examples when on the original envelope. Even the more common ones on envelopes can run into the hundreds.

In 1847 this country issued its first regular issue of postage stamps, a five cent stamp, picturing our first Postmaster-General, Benjamin Franklin, and a ten cent stamp, picturing our first President, George Washington. The five cent stamp was to carry a letter between points less than 300 miles distant; the ten cent for a journey between points more than that. This first issue is

not rare, but it is quite popular, and specimens in extremely fine condition have brought very high prices.

The average philatelist tries to soft-pedal the dollar sign in collecting, as do most avid hobbyists. The thrill of the chase, the pleasure in acquisition, and the pride in possession are of far greater significance to the true collector. Well meaning souls often pose two questions to someone whom they have just discovered to be a philatelist: What is your collection worth? and How many stamps do you have? Neither question is a polite one, and the reply, if indeed one is forthcoming, is not apt to be a helpful one.

Nevertheless, in the past few decades the motivating factor which has induced many to take up stamp collecting has been the desire to make money. The fact that so many collectors have indeed made money with their stamps, has induced many more to feel that they can too. It is the same with the stock market. It is given to a few to be fortunate, but one can obtain no guarantee that his financial rewards will be rich ones.

The buying of sheets of our commemorative stamps is presently a popular vogue. A commemorative is a stamp issued to call attention to an anniversary, to show mourning for a deceased national figure, or to be used as propaganda. In the past decade from five to thirty different ones have been issued each year. There are commemoratives issued thirty to fifty years ago which today sell for as much as a thousand times their

original selling price at the Post Office. Had one bought sheets of these when they were available, one could very well retire on the proceeds. The fact that few people did buy them is easily deduced from their very scarcity.

On the other hand, thousands of hopeful "investors" are buying sheets of today's commemoratives with the fond hope that these too will boom in prices the way the early ones did. It is futile to tell them that this cannot happen. Today a minimum of 130,000,000 of each commemorative stamp is issued; on many, there are considerable more. Some of these earlier commemoratives which today are scarce were issued in quantities of less than a million. This is a statistic today's speculators ignore.

The Post Office, contrary to public belief, does not redeem postage stamps. This fact has brought about an activity that exists and does a thriving business for the thousands engaged in it: the buying of unused sheets at a discount, to be sold to mail users at smaller discounts. With the literally millions and millions of dollars which have been "invested" in these mint sheets of stamps, and which will never "boom" in price, there are enough of these stamps in safe deposit vaults to keep the discount postage gentlemen in business for many years.

But stamp collecting can be a profitable hobby. If one collects intelligently and wisely, buying quality material from reputable sources, a collection can only increase in value. A stamp that is scarce

enough to sell for a dollar or two can only increase in scarcity. The ravages of time have their effect on stamps, as on everything else, and a scarce stamp can only become scarcer as the years go by. (It does not necessarily follow that a common stamp can become scarce). And since the number of philatelists has increased each year since Sir Rowland Hill came on the scene in 1840, the lessening supply of desirable stamps coupled with the increasing demand can force prices in only one direction.

Stamps are no less receptive to the basic laws of economics than any other commodity: supply and demand provide the key. If supply is large, and demand is small, the item becomes difficult to sell. (So it is with these hoards of mint sheets, laid away by the thousands, for which there are only sellers, few buyers). But if the demand is large, and the supply small, the price trend can only be upward. (So it is with stamps which take a bit of finding, and obviously, a bit of paying.)

But the richest rewards of philately are not to be found in dollar signs. Rather, they are in the friendships to be made with philatelists, friendships that transcend, race, religion, and nationality. They are in the knowledge that stamp collecting brings of history, economics, sociology, engraving, printing. They are in the satisfaction that comes from a job well done. And with a bow somewhat in the direction of the all-important dollar sign, it also comes in the realization that here is a hobby in which one can have his cake and eat it, too. The money

invested in a good stamp collection is not spent and gone forever, as in so many hobbies, but rather a substantial part of it -- even all of it, and more -- is left, when one gives up philately, through choice or necessity.

It all started with Rowland Hill's label. It is no wonder that in 1940, the hundredth anniversary of his invention, dozens of countries besides his own (including our own United States) honored him with commemorative stamps.



Pat at the Outdoor stamp bourse (Plaza Mayor) in Madrid.

A few words about the author

Herman(Pat)Herst, Jr.

Brother Herman (Pat) Herst was born on March 17th, thus acquiring the sobriquet Pat. Some years ago it was reported in *Sports Illustrated* that, "Seven days a week, every day of the year, Pat looks at stamps, writes about stamps, talks about stamps, "in color," he says. *The New York Times* described Brother Herst as a "Philatelic Raconteur Extraordinaire." To Pat, no hobby, sport, or pastime can compare with philately."

Truly a legend in his own time, Pat's accomplishments are unceasing. He received the John A. Luff Award of the American Philatelic Society in 1961 for his exceptional contributions to stamp collecting. He is a Honorary Life Member of the American Stamp Dealers Association and was cofounder of the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum. His books *Nassau Street, Fun and Profit in Stamp Collecting, Forensic Philately*, and others are basic to any philatelic library. His first postage stamp article appeared in 1934. Pick up a philatelic magazine or newspaper today and you can usually find, read and enjoy one of his outstanding articles.

Some years ago, Brother Pat was raised in Mount Nebo Lodge (now King Solomon Beethoven Lodge) New York City. He promptly joined the Masonic Stamp Club of New York and is one of our veteran members.

THE WORSHIPFUL SOCIETY OF FREE MASONS -
"THE OPERATIVES".

As intimated in our last issue, we are pleased to be able to announce the release of a Special Souvenir Cover to commemorate the establishment of the above Society in Australia. The date of the postmark on the Cover (illustrated opposite) coincided with the arrival of representatives of the Society in Australia from London, U.K. On that day, September 28th. 1991, they arrived in Perth, Western Australia and commenced a very intensive itinerary involving the six mainland States of Australia before proceeding on to New Zealand on October 11th. This is the most recent of the many other Masonic Septs and Orders already active in Australia, and the credit for its establishment must go to our member from Geelong, Victoria, Bro. KENT HENDERSON, who having previously been to London to become a member of the Society, returned with full enthusiasm, and began the arduous task of setting in motion the intricate details of co-ordinating the necessary interest required to establish a potential membership. Such was

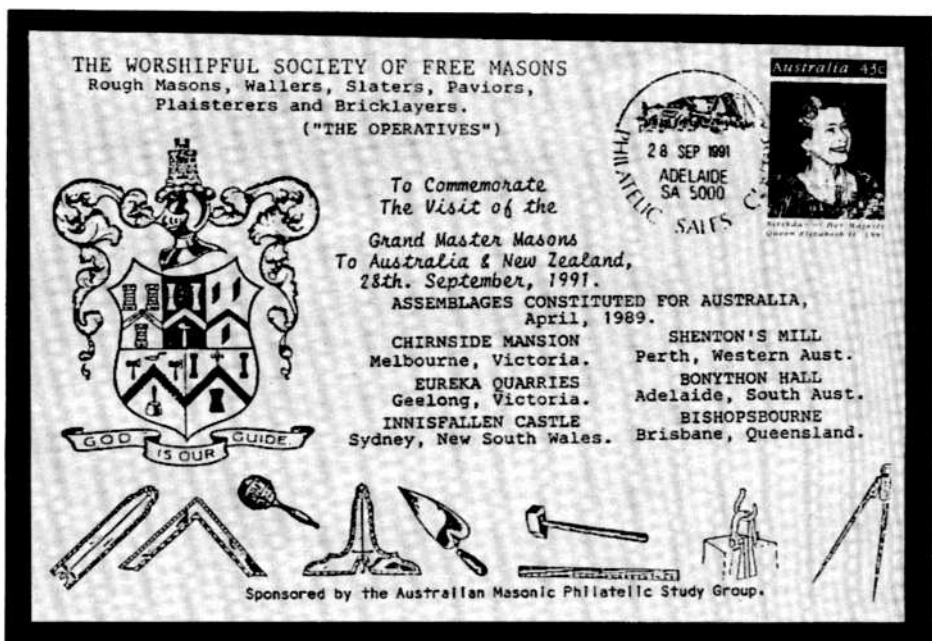
the response to his efforts, that a delegation from each State flew to London in March 1989 for the purpose of Constituting the six Assemblages as they are known in this Order. The Society operates in the United Kingdom, and countries within the British Commonwealth. Apparently little is known about the Society in foreign countries. The American historian Dr. Albert Mackey devotes only four lines in his Encyclopedia to the subject and cites Dr. Thomas Carr among others as 'active in the modern study and practise of old gild customs'. W.Bro. Carr published a paper in 1911-12 explaining much of the ceremonial working of the 'Operative' Lodge. According to its Constitutions, the Order was founded in 1913, and as the sub-heading on the Cover states, the object of the Society is to perpetuate, or preserve a memorial of, the practices of operative Free Masons.

Membership is open to all Master Masons who are also Mark Master Masons and Royal Arch Companions.

The Ceremonials consist of seven Degrees, the candidate being termed an 'Indentured Apprentice' in the first, and thereafter, progresses through an intricate web of operative practices. For the 6th. Degree he must have been duly installed as a Master in a Craft and also a Mark Lodge.

The Cover is available to members of this Group at \$A2.00, \$US1.75 , UK£1.00 (non-members \$US3.00, UK£1.50 which includes airmail postage)

We make no apologies for again using the Queen's Birthday stamp (as on the recent Knight Templar Cover) - no other stamp in our current postal system was even remotely related to the subject, but, after all, in British Commonwealth Countries, the Queen is 'toasted' and the Royal Anthem rendered in her honour, at the Festive Board of all Masonic Septs.



STAMP COLLECTING AS AN INVESTMENT

William Thomas Spencer

Andrew Jackson Lodge No. 120

Philately, a coined Greek word meaning literally "love of what is free of further tax," is the most widely followed hobby in the world.¹

Stamp collecting as an investment, a collector or investor needs to know when to buy and how best to preserve the investment.

The idea of a postal system has been in use since biblical times and is noted in Second Chronicles 30:6. The first established postal service was started by Charlemagne in the early ninth century, and then later by the Roman Catholic Church. In the fifteenth century there were only three sources using a postal service, the church, the king and his court, and the merchants.² The ordinary citizenry did not have a postal service because for the most part only nobles could read.

Before stamps were used on letters they carried post marks which were placed on letters at the post office. In the year 1840, Sir Rowland Hill (1795 - 1879) brought about the first official postage stamp in Great Britain and the world.³ The first postage stamp was placed on sale May 1, 1840 and was called the Penny Black. It is known as this because it has a black background with white lettering consisting of the word postage at the top between two maltese crosses. At the bottom of the stamp were the words "one penny" between two check letters. Check letters were used to tell where the stamp was on the sheet. In the center a profile of Queen Victoria at the age of seventeen.

Who was the first collector or investor? No one knows for sure.⁵ Did the first collector have any idea that the little pieces of paper

he was collecting would become something more than a hobby.

Stamps have now become an investment for other than the speculators and collectors. In 1980 the firm of Newhard, Cook and Company negotiated a \$23,000.00 investment for the pension fund of Primary Color Laboratory, Incorporated, located in New Orleans.⁶ This is not to say a investor can make stamps or collectibles part of an individual retirement account. Congress prohibited collectibles as individual retirement account investments.⁷

In 1970 a syndicate of nine men was formed, to buy as a ten year investment against inflation a stamp for \$280,000.00. This stamp was first found in an attic by seventeen year old L. Vernon Vaughan in 1873. Mr. Vaughan sold the stamp to a Scottish collector for \$1.50. Five years later the collector sold the stamp for \$600.00. On April 5, 1980 this one and only one-cent British Guiana stamp was sold to an anonymous collector at auction for a total of \$935,000.00.⁸

Investing in postage stamps is not stamp collecting in the real meaning of the word. Investing is something done only by people who have a surplus of cash. Unless a person is financially situated, investment buying is not for the low income.⁹ If someone has a modest income and still wishes to invest in stamps, and does not want to sink a lot of money into a collection; there are commemorative mint sheets and souvenir sheets. Commemorative mint sheets are just a "complete unseparated group of stamps as originally printed"¹⁰ of some special event. Souvenir sheets are "small sheets containing one or more stamps with commemorative inscription written in the boarder."

The price of stamps have taken a most serious tumble in twenty years

or more, because stamp dealers have undergone a severe economic pinch. The retail price of some of the Norfolk Island stamps have dropped seventy-five percent in the last two years. There are still a lot of bargains for the stamp investors because as the prime interest rate drops, dealers will be able to get a loan from the bank without having to pay high interest rates.¹²

The best way to be insured of making a profit during a slump, is to have "bought only the best stamps quality money and budget could buy and by intelligently balancing their stamp portfolio."¹³ During a slump in the stamp market is the time to buy. This is because stamp collecting continues to grow as a hobby, and many stamps or sets of stamps that were not within the budget of the average collector are now within his budget.¹⁴ When there is a slump in the market many investors will try to cut their losses by putting valuable stamps on the market.¹⁵ They will make a nice profit from them. This is when one can build a fine collection of valuable stamps, with ready money. "Stamps can be both a hobby and a hedge against an unstable economy."¹⁶ "During World War II, it was not uncommon for Germans to convert their assets into stamps and mail them to relatives abroad."¹⁷ This is a way of keeping all or part of one's assets in uncertain times, and its much better then stocks or bonds.

Who should invest in stamps? Stamp collecting has been called the hobby of kings and kids.¹⁸ Some of the world famous collectors have been: King George V, King George VI, Queen Elizabeth II, General Mark W. Clark, and Lily Pons. The not so famous collectors the boy or girl next door, the milk man, and bus driver. "Stamp collecting is a rich man's hobby." "By rich, I mean very rich like a multimillionaire?"

The answer is both "yes and no."¹⁹ Investing in stamps is just like investing in the stock market: one has to know something about what one is doing. There are many books and magazines a collector or investor can read and study. A collector does not have to be super rich to invest in stamps or the stock market. All one needs is money that is not needed to live on. By this I mean an extra \$25, 50, 75, 100 or more a month. This can be invested in one of two ways: first after studying the market and learning which stamps are valuable, a investor can go to the local stamp dealer and buy the stamps wanted; second, a investor can get in touch with a reputable investment firm that deals in rare stamps. These firms will set-up an account and start a portfolio of rare stamps. The investment account could be established for as little as \$25.00 a month up to a maximum of \$1,000.00. This can be paid either by check or credit card. Reuters has announced that they will include quotes on rare stamps as part of their international market information report.²⁰

A collector or investor should also know about current events. War plays a part in affecting the price of stamps. Until the Falkland Island conflict hardly anyone but a stamp collector heard of those British dependencies. A set of eight stamps printed in 1946 rose from \$3.25 to \$4.25 in the United States. "Dealers in England are willing to pay \$5.50 and their price is \$10.00. As of October 1982, the price was \$25.00 and rising."²¹

Errors are very good investments. This is because most of the postal authorities don't inspect every stamp printed or artists slip up when drawing the pictures.²²

"Investment buying takes two forms."²³ One accumulates a stock of

current stamps in full sheets, and in quantities, the other form is to buy rare and costly stamps and hold them.²⁴ The first is easy, just go to the post office and buy as many sheets of stamps as one wants. The sheets are about eight and a half by eleven inches. The stamp booklets are now becoming collectors items. The coil or roll stamps are now coming out with many errors in them. If a collector buys a roll of stamps it just might pay to go through the roll before using. Sometimes a stamp will be perforated down the center as well as the sides. In this case, don't remove just the stamp with the odd perforation but also the stamp to the right and left as well.

As soon as a collector hears of a conflict such as what happen in the Falklands, the collector should buy as many stamps as one can afford. The price may be much higher later. "The value of an existing collection seems to increase about fifteen percent every year, that percentage is hard to achieve if you're just starting a collection now."²⁵

The following are tips for collecting and investing in stamps.

1. Good bets are Great Britain and Commonwealth nations.
2. Anticipate demands based on anniversaries. In 1977 the fiftieth anniversary of Lindberg's flight drove up the value of the 1927 stamp honoring that event. Few collectors did anything about it, and when the cost shot up only a hand full made a big profit.
3. Don't buy stamps on which the biggest profit already has been made.
4. First Day Covers are a sleeper now but might not be for much longer.
5. Use the advice of a responsible firm to collect off beat philatelic items that everyone else isn't.²⁶

Stanley Gibbons and Joseph Kardwell Inc. have investment portfolios.

Stanley Gibbons will store and insure, at a free, special stamp portfolios averaging \$10,000.00.²⁷ Investors are advised to be prepared to hold onto the stamps for at least four or five years for the best returns.²⁸ If a collector has a nice collection with an investment value, it is best to put these stamps in a safe deposit box and say nothing about it. Letting people know you collect stamps is inviting trouble.

There is always the possibility of prices plunging. Less than top-quality specimens were off as much as fifty percent from their 1980 high.²⁹ This, I believe, caused by the high inflation and high interest rates making it undesirable to buy so the prices are coming down.

Photograph your collection. If they are stolen, the photographs can be used as proof of ownership, as a guide for those searching for the stamps, and positive identification. All that is needed is a good 35mm camera with close up lens and a tripod. Use black and white film, this produces a crisp image for security purposes. Microfilming is also good. A thousand pages can be microfilmed in less than two hours. Keep the photographic records apart from your collection, the best place is in a safe deposit box.³⁰ It is, also, best to have a list of the stamps by their Scott or Stanley Gibbons catalogue number, and have the price of the stamps updated every five or ten years. Price updating can be done by collector or by a responsible dealer.

"Never expose your albums to bright direct sunlight." Stand albums upright with enough breathing space in between pages so stamps won't stick to pages or mounts.³¹

Stamps should be mounted once they are brought home. Stamp hinges should not be used on stamps. The use of stamp hinges reduces the value

of the stamp by twenty percent. If stamps have hinges on them they can be left on. If the hinges are to be removed the best way is to use a stamp lift.³² Don't put stamps in glassine envelopes and put them away for good. The acid in glassine over a very long time could destroy the stamps. There are two ways to keep single stamps: first, is a Lighthouse stock book. This book has a number of pages in it which are made of heavy cardboard with nine rows made of a clear material to hold the stamps; second, one can use a looseleaf notebook and buy special pages that have four, five, or six rows of clear plastic to hold the stamps. The best way to keep souvenir sheets or single stamps is to use showgard mounts. These mounts are clear in the front and the back is black and split. The souvenir sheets or stamps are put in from the back. Next, the stamp in the mount can be placed on a heavy cardboard-like page with fine grid lines. The back of the mounts have gum on them. Wet only the top of the mount and place on the page. "The condition of the stamp is an all important factor."³³ If a collector collects stamps from envelopes, cut them off with about a quarter inch all the way around. Use a stamp lift so as not to remove the gum on the stamp. Let stamps dry, then place in a book or in a stamp press to prevent curling. Work a collection, just don't let it sit there. Remove stamps from their mounts, let them air then replace. This will keep stamps from sticking to their mounts.

With the onset of technology, it won't be long before "mail is sent by satellite."³⁴ The British Postal service began the first international electronic mail service on June 17, 1980. A letter written in a hurry in London can now be sent via satellite to Toronto in two minutes. Air-mailing can take a week or more to go from North America to Great

Britain. The cost for satellite is £ 4 (\$9.00) as compared to 26 p (.40 approx.) airmail. Will this do away with postage stamps? Maybe, maybe not. If it does, then the price of stamps must surely go up because more people will want to collect them for there will be no more. If satellite postage doesn't do away with stamps, then the price of stamps will still have its ups and downs. The best investment as far as stamps go is Great Britain. Mr. Gotthardt believes that since 1925 the stamps of Great Britain are the best investments.

¹Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, Vol. 22, p. 183.

²Blair, The World of Stamps and Stamp Collecting, Introduction.

³Harris, A Brief History of Postage Stamps, Harris How to Collect Stamps, p. 7.

⁴Melville, Stamp Collecting, pp. 59, 60, 61.

⁵Harris How to Collect Stamps, p. 4.

⁶Garino, "Brokerage House Collects Profits by Trading in Stamps and Coins," Wall Street Journal, November 7, 1980, p. 29.

⁷Kiefer, "Collectibles are for Love, not Money," Christian Science Monitor, January 22, 1982, p. 10.

⁸Winfrey, "World's Most Valuable Stamp Auctioned for a Record \$850,000," New York Times, April 6, 1980, p. 21.

⁹Villiard, Collecting Stamps, 1975, p. 102.

¹⁰Postal Service, The Postal Service Guide to U. S. Stamps, 1983, p. 6.

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¹²Showalter, "Investing in Islands," Stamp World, February 1983, p. 34.

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³⁴MacLead, "British Mail Takes Off by Satellite - Posthaste," Christian Science Monitor, July 2, 1980, p. 9.

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October 9, 1991

Nicholas Batalias
27-05 Urban Place
Fair Lawn, New Jersey 07410

Dear Mr. Batalias:

I was recently sent a number of free first day covers as part of my membership to the Masonic Stamp Club of New York. They were beautiful and I appreciate receiving them.

I thought you might be interested in having a couple of first day issues we have had here in Vincennes over the past decade. The first is the George Rogers Clark postcard issued February 23, 1979 to commemorate the Bicentennial of Clark's capture of Fort Sackville on February 25, 1779. There is fairly good evidence that Clark belonged to the Masonic fraternity. The second is the first day of issue of the Francis Vigo postcard issued May 24, 1986. There are a few sources that claim Vigo to have been a Freemason, but they are vague and never supported by any evidence.

I hope you find these first day issues interesting.

Sincerely,


Robert R. Stevens

