

THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

*The Santa Rosa Stamp Club: Promoting the study,
knowledge, and enjoyment of stamp collecting.
APS Chapter 1584*



Vol. 3, Nos. 3 & 4

January 2015

Editor's Note:

The Santa Rosa Stamp Club enters its fourth year since its formal organization in the winter of 2012. When Robert Kirk and George Land called a meeting of stamp collectors at the Santa Rosa library in November 2011, they were quite correct in assuming that there would be interest in establishing a stamp club in our region. Much to our good fortune, Martin Feibusch offered the pleasant facilities of the Lodge at Paulin Creek to hold our meetings. He served as our first president and guided us through the steps needed to formally organize as a club. We have since enjoyed learning more about philately, we have a venue to buy and sell stamps, but most importantly, we continue to appreciate the good comradeship that comes with sharing our mutual interests in this wonderful hobby. We look forward to another successful year.

This issue of our newsletter combines both our fall and winter numbers to complete volume 3. We start with a written version of Paul Von Gottfried's interesting presentation on the exotic Indian revenue paper and stamps from our October 2014 meeting. As Paul notes, revenues predate postage stamps. In fact, postage stamps can be viewed as a type of revenue because they meet the legal requirement to prepay for the use of the post to mail letters and parcels. More recently, Bob Kirk entertained our members with his convincing case that stamps can serve as a starting point to explore the most important events and figures in human history. We conclude with an article by Dennis Buss who claims that even the most common and inexpensive stamps can provide an enjoyable philatelic challenge.

Revenue Stamped Paper, Documents and Stamps of the British Empire

Paul Von Gottfried



The use of revenue stamps, revenue stamped paper and documents, precedes the introduction of adhesive postage stamps in 1840. Revenue or 'Fiscal' stamps and documents were used to collect fees and to document legal procedures by many countries throughout the world. Many newspapers used revenue seals. The orange revenue stamp used in Great Britain is well known and often found in Commonwealth collections. This discussion will focus on revenue stamped paper and documents. Revenue stamps may sometimes look like postage stamps, but are intended for use on documents and taxed items such as playing cards, and are usually 'cancelled' by different methods. Today, the use of fiscal stamps on documents and paper has been greatly reduced. Most documents today are related to court fees and procedures. They may include a seal and/or an ink stamp by a notary.

I have especially enjoyed collecting revenue documents and stamps from Great Britain, Ireland and India. Many of the documents shown are for land sale or court fee purposes. They include a seal, revenue paper, revenue stamps as well as various cancellations and signatures. Some documents, especially from Indian States, may include a fingerprint. The use of these procedures was partly to satisfy legal requirements for 'proof' of certification and to prevent forgery. Some examples include Court Fees, Documents, Receipts and various taxes. Stamped paper is a separate category but is considered part of revenue philately.

Stamped paper refers to a foolscap piece of paper that bears a pre-printed revenue stamp, sometimes quite large and ornate. Stamped papers have been used around the world to collect taxes on documents requiring stamping, such as leases; agreements, receipts, court documents and other legal forms. In accord with local regulations, the papers are available from stationers, lawyer's offices, post offices and court stamp vendors. The matter to be recorded is then written or typed on to the stamped paper and it is lodged with the court or other interested party. This is an efficient way of collecting taxes (fees) and stamping documents without the need to submit them to a separate government stamp office.

The 1765 Stamp Act required all British colonies to use stamped paper prepared or approved in London and embossed with a revenue stamp. This led to riots and political agitation and has been credited with sowing the seeds of the American Revolution in the New World.



Stamp paper was actually a Spanish invention and was introduced into India in 1848 following the introduction of the Congreve printing machine. Prior to this, legal documents were written on paper that could vary from strong parchment of good quality to poorer quality found at various stationers. The use of watermarked paper came later. Prolific users of stamped paper have included Great Britain, Ireland, India and the United States.

The 'stamp' sometimes occupies the entire width of the top part of the paper and is often of an intricate and beautiful engraved design in order to enhance security. Some are numbered. The portrait of the ruling monarch was often part of the design. The paper frequently has a whole page watermark used to enhance security. Many of the individual states of India had their own types of stamped paper. In the past these items were quite easy to find and were inexpensive to purchase. Most collectors today rely on auction houses in Great Britain and India to find examples.

The examples I have collected are quite interesting. Although the samples from India are written in the native languages and are difficult to decipher, they are some of the most beautiful examples of stamped paper and documents found in the world.

WESTPEX STAMP SHOW: APRIL 24-26, 2015
SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT MARRIOTT WATERFRONT HOTEL

History on Stamps

Robert Kirk

At our January meeting I had the pleasure of presenting PowerPoint photos of pages from my History on Stamps collection. This article concerns topical collecting as a vehicle for expansion of knowledge about a topic of interest to you, the collector. Some collectors will try to find every stamp ever issued that pictures -- let's say cats, for example. Nothing wrong with that, but how much better to write up such a collection, using the stamp as an illustration for an album that tells about different breeds of cats. The same point could be easily made for any topical -- horses, composers, art, etc.

I collect history on stamps because I got interested in history before I was introduced to stamp collecting at age seven. I think I was always fascinated by the past. As a result, I don't add a stamp to my history collection unless I intend to find out more about the subject, reduce the essential information to a few lines and a headline, and print out a page, using the stamp as illustration.

My collection begins with prehistory but I write up no event that occurred after 1840, the year of the first postage stamp -- the penny black. There are more stamps featuring historic topics than I will ever have time or inclination to study and write about. Barbuda issued a set for every English king since 1066; I don't know if I'll ever complete my write-ups for that bunch of royals. France, Romania, Greece, Spain, and Hungary have issued many stamps with historic themes; Moslem countries, not very many. Stamps must be "politically correct" before a nation will issue them. As a result, no issues have appeared for some incredibly important events: the Atlantic slave trade, the profits from which fueled industrial revolutions in Britain and in New England. No stamp was issued to commemorate the immensely lucrative opium trade that brought profits to the East India Company and debilitated thousands of Chinese. I don't think such stamps will be on a new issue list in the near future.

History on stamps is my favorite topic. Think about illustrating your favorite subject with fascinating stamps.



The Pleasures of Collecting Worthless Stamps

Dennis Buss

I have collected United States stamps ever since I was a youngster. Although my interests have expanded and diversified over the years, I have always maintained my US collection. I have parallel collections for both mint and used US issues. If you collect US stamps no doubt you have observed that there is a price premium on most 19th and early 20th century stamps. However, for issues from the 1930s onward retail prices drop dramatically. In fact, one website commentator claims that "modern US used stamps are virtually worthless." This conclusion is not surprising -- just consult the 2015 edition of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*



and you will learn that most modern commemoratives were issued in the hundreds of millions and a few were printed in quantities of over a billion! Although the numbers printed for regular issue (definitive) stamps are not available, the totals are even higher because most postal patrons use definitives more often than commemoratives. US stamps issued since the 1940s are so plentiful that you can often buy used lots for as little as a dollar per pound.

Although this might sound a bit strange, I actually enjoy collecting used US stamps more than I do their mint counterparts. So, why waste time and effort collecting mostly “worthless” stamps? After all, when it comes time to sell a used US collection, most of the value to be realized will reside with the early classic era stamps. The other 85 to 90 per cent of your stamps are virtually disposable. You might as well instruct your heirs to place them in a recycling bin. Nevertheless, despite the huge numbers issued, finding postally used examples of many modern stamps is a surprisingly challenging task and a few even have high catalogue values.



For example, a quick perusal of the Scott catalogue reveals the task that faces the collector who tries to track down used modern definitive issues. Starting in the 1980s we see an explosion of formats for definitives that share the same basic design. It's not unusual to see a single issue with a dozen or more varieties. They are often printed by as many as three different printing firms each with their own distinct identifying markers. Besides the

traditional sheet, coil and booklet formats, these stamps can be differentiated by self-adhesive or water activated gums, micro-printed security identifiers, year dates, die cut perforations, as well as vending machine types. Another challenge is to find postally used se-tenant blocks, strips and pairs that are still attached. Locating cancelled souvenir sheets and some high valued express and priority mail issues are not only scarce but also more expensive.

As you accumulate your used US collection, especially issues from the “worthless” modern era, there is no reason to splurge on an expensive hingeless album to house them. The Scott Minuteman and the Harris Liberty albums retail for about \$120.00. The Mystic Heirloom is even a bigger bargain selling for \$40.00. I house my used collection in a Harris Liberty album. It includes a useful background commentary on each stamp and, although the pages are a bit flimsy, they are ideal for mounting your stamps with hinges. The Liberty page format is especially advantageous. For example, beginning in the mid 1960s up to the present, the postal service began issuing an increasing number of multiple designs on sheets, se-tenant blocks, strips, panes, and pairs. The album has pages for such issues as the bicentennial, state flags, birds and flowers, and World War II sheets. But it also has pages for these sheets with the stamps broken out into singles. Whereas the singles are more readily found in used condition, obtaining used sheets, se-tenant blocks and strips, as noted previously, is much more difficult. The Liberty album also has spaces for all of the major printing varieties of the recent flag, flora and fauna, winter holiday, and other definitives that will keep the collector of used modern US issues quite busy. In fact, I have to admit, I have more blank spaces from the modern era in my Liberty album than I do in my mint collection album.

As the stamp blog commentator put it:

And yet, for all the talk about the low value, it is very difficult to complete a collection of modern used postage stamps. While a complete collection may be worth very little money, this collecting area can provide a lifetime of fun hunting for missing stamps while costing virtually nothing. You can't beat it for an economical hobby!

Reference: <http://www.stamp-collecting-resource.com/us-postage-stamps.html>

The Santa Rosa Stamp Club

Membership is open to anyone interested in stamp collecting and who agrees to abide by the club By-Laws. The new member fee is \$10.00 which includes \$5.00 dues for the first year of membership. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Lodge at Paulin Creek, 2375 Range Avenue, Building D, Santa Rosa. For information about club membership call Dennis Buss at 707-774-6296 or send an email to srsc2012@yahoo.com

SRSC Officers

President	Paul Von Gottfried
Vice President	Don Test
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2015 Presentation Program

Feb. 3	George Land: My First Stamp Club
Mar. 3	Silent Auction Dennis Buss: Review of <i>A History of America in Thirty-Six Postage Stamps</i>
Apr. 1	Victor Ivashin: The Stamps of Tannu Tuva
May 5	Paul Von Gottfried: British Empire Revenues, Part II
June 2	To Be Announced