

This month's Edition of the LSCC newsletter features a piece about some special new additions to the Dick Colberg collection. While the LSCC has suspended our meetings at the Lebanon Community Library indefinitely, we are all invited to join the PSLC's virtual meetings, which are now held via Zoom on the second and fourth Wednesday's of the month at 6:30 PM. Please check out the PSLC website for more information, or email me for details (stnst2@aol.com). This past summer we've had some great programs, and there's no doubt that the subjects which are scheduled for the fall will be of interest to many of us in the LSCC.

As you can see, I am experimenting with a one-column newsletter this month. If anyone has any suggestions as to the formatting and readability of our newsletter, please email them to me.

Philatelic Souvenirs from the Collection of Uncle Franz

By Dick Colberg (with Scott Ney)

The items seen here were a gift to Dick from an uncle of Nancy's from her first marriage. The uncle was a German Jew and escaped from Germany either just before WW II or very early into it. Uncle Franz died in June, and that was the impetus for doing the research on these items.



This item was issued on April 5, 1937, to “celebrate” Adolph Hitler’s 48th birthday. Though only containing 24 pf. postage, this gummed souvenir sheet was sold for 1 Reichsmark. The inscription translates to: “He who wants to save his people must think heroically”. These souvenir sheets were purchased by collectors and used for commemorative or patriotic cancellations for every conceivable type of event throughout the year 1937. Scott lists this as a semi-postal, B102, and has a value of \$12.50. This was the first in a series of stamps that were issued annually to mark Hitler’s birthday from 1937 through 1944.



The Soviet zone state of Thüringen has been continuously inhabited since the beginning of the 4th Century. In 1945, the state of Thüringen was expanded by the Soviets to include parts of Prussian Saxony and the areas around Erfurt, Muhlhausen, and Norhausen. Erfurt, which dates back to the 8th Century, became the new capital of the East German State.

This 3-stamp gummed souvenir sheet (16N3a) was issued on December 18, 1945 to celebrate both Christmas and Anti-Fascism. The top of the sheet is inscribed “Weihnachtsspende” or “Christmas Fund” and the bottom of the sheet is inscribed “Für Die Opfer Des Fascismus” or “For the Victims of Fascism”. This special charity sheet sold for two Reichsmarks. The same three stamps were also available as perf. 11 singles at post offices. Scott catalogue price for this never hinged sheet is \$300.

Also from Thüringen, this souvenir sheet (16N7b) shows four stamps 4-, 6-, 12-, and 20-pfennigs. They are rouletted around the outside but are imperf between. It was issued December 18, 1945 to publicize Christmas charity. The upper inscription

translates as: "Fund for a Peaceful Christmas 1945". The lower inscription translates to: "To Keep the Social Welfare Flowing Through the State of Thüringen". This sheet sold for 10 Reichsmarks, of which 9.50 RM went to the lands of Thüringen. Scott Catalogue price for this mint, never hinged sheet is \$1,150.





#16N9

Scott Cat. = \$13.

Next from Thüringen, a souvenir sheet issued in two different versions on March 27, 1946 (Illustrated above and below). The purpose was to raise money for the reconstruction of the National Theater in Weimar. The sheet was issued both imperforate (upper), no gum and perforate (lower) gummed. The designs depict Friederich von Schiller (6 pf), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (10 pf), Franz Liszt (12 pf), Christoph Wieland (16 pf) and the National Theater (40 pf). These sheets sold for 7.50 Reichsmarks.



#16N9f

Scott Cat. = \$52.50 NH

Lastly, from Thüringen, a semi-postal souvenir sheet issued March 30, 1946 to publicize the reconstruction of bridges in the Soviet zone state of Thüringen. The imperforate sheet sold for 5 Reichsmarks (3.40 RM face). The designs depict: Saalburg Bridge (10pf + 60 pf), Camsdorf Bridge in Jena (12 pf + 68 pf), Goschwitz Bridge (16 pf + 74 pf) and Ilm Bridge in Mellingen (24 pf + 76 pf). The paper has an interesting waffle pattern, as seen in the image. The four stamps were also issued as imperf singles. This sheet is Scott Catalogue #16NB4a with a MNH price of \$275.



Moving on from Thüringen, this gummed souvenir sheet is a West Saxony semi-postal (Scott #14NB16c) issued May 8, 1946. It was issued to publicize the Leipzig Spring Fair, and all four stamps depict the Marketplace and the Old City Hall. The sheet sold for 20 Reichsmarks (1.26 RM face). The individual stamps were also issued perf 13 ½ x 13 on watermarked white paper and unwatermarked grayish paper; and imperforate on white watermarked paper. Scott Catalogue value for this MNH sheet is \$65.00. The price is italicized, meaning it is rarely seen and traded. The Leipzig Trade Fair, which has its origins in the middle ages, has been held for centuries, and the event became one of Germany's first big opportunities to rejoin

the international community. The first post-war fair in 1946 was dubbed “The Peace Fair”, and throughout the Cold War era the fair helped facilitate relations between East Germany and Western nations, functioning as a meeting place for businessmen and politicians from both sides of the Iron Curtain. There have been many stamp issues marking the occasion, making a collection of “Leipziger Messe” material a fine stand-alone topical collection.



This last item takes us back to the dark days prior to World War II, and is not a souvenir sheet. The stamps are Germany Scott #B116 & B117, which are described in the old Minkus catalogs as the “torchbearer at the Brandenburg Gate”. They were issued on January 28, 1938 to commemorate the 5th Anniversary (Jan. 30, 1938) of the assumption of power by the Nazis. Clearly, the card is also a commemoration of the event, franked by the two subject stamps and an appropriate cancellation on each.

There is no listing for this card in Scott or Michel, and a search of Google, eBay and Delcampe turned up nothing. Commemorative cards such as this are sometimes known as “gedenkblatt” in Germany. As a souvenir item of the day, one would suspect that many were sold. But, if that is true, why aren’t there several listed for sale or even catalogued? The used stamps have a Scott value of \$2 each. The prices

are also in italics, lending further credence for these stamps only being used on this souvenir card and few, if any, being soaked off to be put in an album.



A Rich Source of Topicals is Alive and Well . . .

Wait a minute, Mr. Postman! There was a piece in *The Economist* last month (August 20, 2020) of interest to philatelists, particularly topical collectors. In “Why African Countries Issue Stamps Celebrating English Cricketers”, the magazine, which is headquartered in London, sought to explain why the Central African Republic, a French-speaking republic due to its colonial history, issued a set of stamps to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of English cricketer Len Hutton in 2016. As it turns out, CAR wasn’t the only African country without

colonial ties to England to honor Sir Hutton; French-speaking Niger and Portuguese-speaking Mozambique also issued their own commemorative stamps.

As if to provide a quick answer to the question for their readers who weren't necessarily interested in the details, they flatly stated the simple explanation for this practice: "it helps pay the bills". And this practice, while not new, is flourishing in the age of e-commerce. "Collectors scouring the internet are willing to pay handsomely for such stuff. A set of Hutton stamps from the CAR fetches 15.50 Euros (\$18.50). Niger's depiction of a besuited Hutton is sufficiently sought after to command a two Euro premium. This is a handy way for African states to boost revenues."

The Economist goes on to state that "There are signs that the practice is getting out of hand," citing as an example Sierra Leone, a country with a population of 7.6 million, that issued 1,566 different stamps last year. We touched on the subject of the many new stamps that the United States issues a few months ago in our newsletter, and how it seems that the best way to collect new stamps is to forgo the completist approach in favor of collecting what you like. Topical collecting is a wonderful way to collect what you like, and still have a checklist of items to pursue.

Personally, I like this idea. There's a set of stamps issued by Grenada in 1988, the "U.S. Baseball Series" (Scott 1664 – 1672). This set seems wildly out of place, as there has not been a single major league baseball player who has hailed from Grenada (although, former Pirates slugger Dave Parker, not featured in this series, was born in Grenada, Mississippi). I really don't have a spot in my stamp collection for this series, either, but because I am a baseball fan who grew up in the 80's, I've had a listing planted on my eBay watch list for the past couple of months. The set includes stamps of then-current players like Cal Ripken Jr, Mike Schmidt, and Dwight Gooden, along with all-time favorites like Robinson, Mantle, Mayes, Ruth, and Clemente. There's even a variation: Pete Rose, who was famously banned from baseball when gambling allegations surfaced in 1989, was removed from one of the sheets in later printings. Apparently, the Grenada Baseball Series was a great commercial success when it was issued, and the listing I am watching has multiples with plenty remaining in it to sell. So perhaps, not much has changed in the past 30 years; there are still plenty of stamp collectors out there, looking to devour some of the great topicals that are still being issued all around the world. While the vast majority of issues might not be suitable for

investment, they still provide enjoyment to philatelists everywhere, and revenue for countries who rely on stamp collectors to help them with their postal budgets.

