

Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club

September, 2021

Number 26

The September meeting of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club is on Tuesday, September 21 at 6:30 PM in the community room of the Lebanon Community Library, 125 N 7th St. Lebanon (17042). We hope to see you there!

Something new and different.

By Dick Colberg

You all know that I am a certified philatelic appraiser. Most of the appraisals that I have done in the past 25 years have been routine. Occasionally I get a surprise. Like the British Commonwealth collection I appraised in New Jersey a few years ago. The first page of the first album had 30 Penny Blacks on it. There was even a page of 18 color trials for a 1922 set from Ireland. Now where do I go?

Fortunately, the original owner had bought this set from an auction and had saved the page from the auction catalogue. This referenced “Hib. Cat. £20 - £45 each”. A check with the APS library showed this to be the Hibernia Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of Ireland, published in 1986. It was updated and reprinted as Hibernia Handbook and Catalogue in 2002. This collection also had three pages of proofs for the 1857-59 issue from Ceylon. Again, now what? The APRL was no help on this one. Fortunately, I found some auction records from a Spink sale, and I was able to estimate the values.

In June of this year, I was presented with another challenge. From Florida came a call from the heirs of a collector who had a collection of Imperial Russia stamps and covers. There were ten albums of 35 – 40 pages each. The heirs were able to photograph every page and upload the file to the Internet for me. I normally do not appraise from photos. But, in this COVID era, I must make adjustments. In that I cannot attest to the condition, front and back, of the stamps, I put a lot of weasel words in my appraisal write-up.

The Scott Catalogue was easy enough to use to evaluate for the early Russia and offices abroad. But I was thrown for a loop when I found that three of the ten books were full of Russia locals. From Scott Tiffney at the APRL I found that I needed the Zemstvos catalogue of Russia local stamps. Actually, I think Zemstvos means locals. The catalogue was published by a guy named Chuchin and all stamps were given Chuchin numbers. I was able to borrow the catalogue from the APRL. A hitch is that it was published in 1925 and never updated. On top of that, the prices were in Gold Rubles! Thank goodness for Google! I was able to convert

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from 1925 Gold Rubles to 1925 U.S. dollars and then adjust for our inflation between 1925 and 2021. FYI, the 1925 Gold Ruble is equivalent to \$0.51 today.

Evaluating those three albums of locals proved to be a real challenge. Fortunately, the Zemstvos catalogue pictured virtually everything, albeit in black and white. I'm not much good with the Cyrillic alphabet!

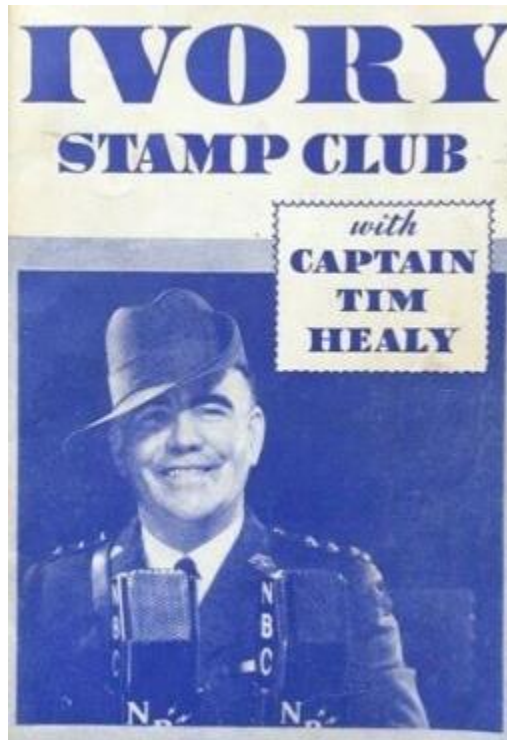
Another challenge for me was that there were several of the locals on cover. The catalogue did not give prices for the stamps on cover. I assumed that these were good items but could only estimate their value. But I knew I'd have to do better than that. Early in this process I had contacted the president of Rossica, the Russia stamp collectors' society. His name is Ray Pietruszka and he was of immense help. He was able to steer me to a couple of auction sites where this material is regularly sold. One of them had recently had an auction of a few hundred lots of Russia locals on cover! Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus! From the auction results I found that my estimates for the stamps on cover were low by a factor of as much as 10. Ray had told me that this stuff was hot, but wow!

I'll finish this with some scans of the Russian material. Some scans won't be as clear as I'd like, but they are all second-generation scans and some degradation is to be expected. *Continued on Page 6 . . .*

August 2021 LSCC Meeting

Three members (Dick, Joe, and Don) made it to the August 17 meeting of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club. Dick presented a program on US Airmail First Day Covers. At the meeting the possibility of disbanding the club, due to lack of membership, was discussed. In the end, all three members present were in favor of continuing operations, and so for the time being the LSCC will continue its long tradition of being "Lebanon's stamp club". This invites other discussions about the future of the club, some that may be easier than others, which can be taken up by club members in the waning months of 2021. – Scott Ney

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The Future of Philately: Does it matter?

Yes! And no.

By Scott Ney

The views expressed in this essay are my opinions, and not necessarily shared by the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club or any of its other members.

There's a lot of discussion about how the hobby of stamp collecting is in decline; membership in the biggest stamp associations continues to trend at a net loss, as a number of smaller clubs cease to operate. The number of new members for each are not making up for the number of lifelong philatelists who are aging out of the hobby or passing on to their great reward.

Undoubtedly there's some concern that the hobby is in an irreversible state of decline. While that may be true, I believe that decline was inevitable. In America, the decline seemed to accelerate in the early 1990s, coincidentally perhaps, when we began to say goodbye to an increasing number of stamp collecting family, friends, and mentors who began their journeys into philately on the radio with Captain Tim and President Roosevelt in the 1930s and 1940s. There will never be a more successful ambassador for stamp collecting than FDR, our four-term war-time president, even if an immensely popular modern-day "social media influencer" were to pick up the hobby and bring it to greater prominence on the world-wide web.

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There are obstacles that are hindering the growth of the hobby that weren't there when I was a kid (I'm turning 46 this month). The biggest one probably isn't the fact that stamps aren't widely used anymore; there are already billions of them out there, including billions that have a market value that justifies giving them to a child for free. But what can a child of seven or eight do with a pile of stamps, if they have no one to mentor them in the hobby? What can they do without a pair of tongs to handle them properly, or an album or some other suitable place to display and store them? My answer, based partly on personal experience, is "not much". And while I have fun memories of visiting the Lebanon Stamp and Coin shop, it's been gone for several years and is not coming back. In most places, there's no longer a retail establishment for a child or young adult to drop into and connect with the hobby.

My subtitle contains a resounding "Yes!" in part for those of you who may be reading this who are still making a living off the hobby. Your job may or may not include making a connection with the younger generation, because if you're nearing retirement that might not matter as much to you as to someone who wants to keep dealing or working in the field for another decade or longer. Since philately is a social hobby, one thing to keep in mind is that younger people socialize and communicate differently than your older customers. For example, I saw an article earlier this year (on the Internet) about how young people across the pond were engaging with the hobby via Instagram. Instagram is a smartphone app which easily allows people to share photos with their friends and followers, which makes it a good way for them to share their favorite stamps with a friend. If you'd like a modern way to connect with other people to promote our hobby, having a presence on the internet is a must.

My subtitle also includes a small-case "no", because for the rest of us, it might not matter what the future holds. This hobby is something that most of us do for fun, profiting from it if we're able but not concerned in the least if the money that we budget on it brings us a financial return. FDR realized that managing his stamp collection could help him escape the stress of managing an entire nation at war. It really doesn't matter what the hobby will look like in 10 years if we're relaxing and having fun with it today.

People who grow old gracefully have a way of adapting their thinking towards the changes going on in the world. I think Stanley Gibbons was on to something when they bought the One-cent Magenta with the intention of selling shares of ownership in it. One thing that's changing with the times is peoples' sense of ownership. Technology brings the world closer together, along with things like cryptocurrency and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) – assets that exist only virtually. At first it was kind of hard for me to conceptualize a virtual currency that's neither based on gold nor fiat. But whether I fully understand it or not, it's growing acceptance as payment by the business and finance communities, and recognition by the government, gives it legitimacy. I didn't believe in \$2 million Tom Brady football cards at first, either. But they are multiplying in number as they cycle on and off the market, and will not be going anywhere but up in value anytime soon. Crypto tokens don't take up any shelf space, and are not subject to decay and destruction by the elements, and neither is a share of ownership in the world's most

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valuable stamp. Many people of average means will be excited to share that they are part owners of that stamp on social media, and will be able to do so safely, without attracting the attention of dangerous individuals.

While it's comforting to believe that "there is nothing new under the sun", every new advance in what we already have has its advantages. That's not to say that old friends like stamp collecting need to change along with the times. The familiar feelings I get when working on my stamp collection provide me with an immense emotional return on my investment of time and treasure. So I'm not too worried about what the future holds for philately.



If all goes as planned, this stamp will soon belong to the hobby. (Photo from a Pinterest post)

Calendar of Events

The Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month. The dates for the upcoming meetings follow . . .

September 21: Monthly LSCC meeting at the Library. Program: Scott Ney will share some of the items donated to the club by Thomas Groff, son of the late Arthur Groff. The plan is to bring a tote full of items that are in a state of disorganization, so that club members can have fun sorting it out! Don't forget to bring your stamp tongs with you . . .

October 19: Monthly LSCC meeting at the Library. Program to be determined.

November 16: Monthly LSCC meeting at the Library. Program to be determined.

December 21: Location and program to be determined

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Something New and Different (continued)

By Dick Colberg



Irbit Chuchin #2

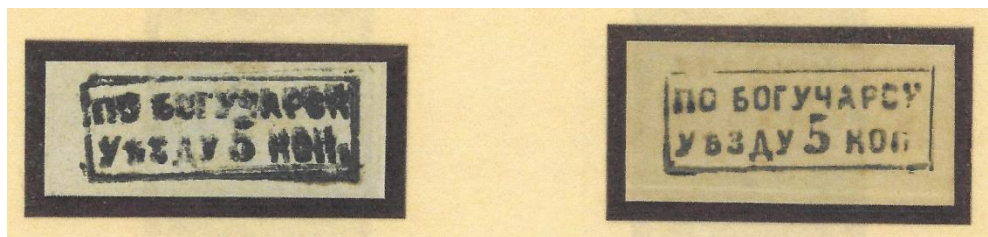
I grossly underestimated this one. The stamp catalogues \$0.05 and I estimated the cover at \$30. A similar cover sold at auction for \$230.

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Russia: Offices in Turkey, #1. Block of four.
Scott Catalogue value is \$1400.

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Boghuchary; Chuchin #1 & #2



Maloarkhangelsk: Chuchin #1



Russia Scott #CO7 & CO8

Complete Set of 7 Stamps \$5415

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Ostrov; Chuchin #7

Another of my underestimates. I estimated the cover at \$30. A cover just like it, including a strip of three, sold at auction for \$180.

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Kherson Essays.

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Totma: Chichin #8

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An interesting cover. Russia, Scott #62 block of four and a pair of Serbia, Scott #9. This cover originated in Vladivostok and needed stamps of Russia and Serbia to get to New York. It would be a chore to research the actual rate, including registration fee.

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9th and Cumberland: LSCC Ads and Announcements

Wanted: Images and memories of Lebpx, the annual show of the Lebanon Stamp Collectors Club from the 1970s to the early 1990s. These will be featured in our **October 2021** newsletter. Please submit your pictures and notes or articles by September 30 for inclusion in the October newsletter to Scott Ney (stnst2@aol.com).

HCD 39 25M-5-40

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

REQUEST FOR RELEASE FROM QUARANTINE

Dear Sir:

..... living at in
..... township suffering from..... has
recovered } and is believed to be free from infection. The provisions of the law being fulfilled,
died }

please release from quarantine on19 . At that time the
..... days quarantine period will have expired.

D. O.
..... M. D.
..... P. O.

Note:—Cases of diphtheria, scarlet fever and measles having discharging ears or running nose are to be reported to the County Medical Director before quarantine can be raised.

JOHN J. SHAW, M. D.
Secretary of Health