

Scribblings

...from the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library



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Ellengail Beuthel, Librarian

The U.S. Post Office ... and Politics

By Rusty Morse

When collectors get together to share in their mutual interest in the hobby they generally abide by the long-standing social conventions of many fraternal groups by restricting their discourse to the material of philately ... and avoiding the social minefields of religion and politics.

One of the true joys of sharing mutual interests in a philatelic setting is that we indeed may concentrate on the material and avoid conflicts that divide many groups.

As one researches the postal history of the United States, however, it becomes clear that to understand the inner workings of the Post Office - the stamp issuing agency - politics was at the core of its existence, at least until 1971.

Our first Postmaster General, Ben Franklin, was really a figurehead as far as the structure of the Post Office was concerned. He took office July 26, 1775 and turned over the job to his son-in-law, Richard Bache, November 7, 1776. At the time there were far fewer than 100 Post Offices. Bache served until the new US Government got organized formally on January 28, 1782. In 1790 there were only 75 post offices. By 1800 the number had grown to 903 and its headquarters had a permanent home in the new capital, Washington, D.C.

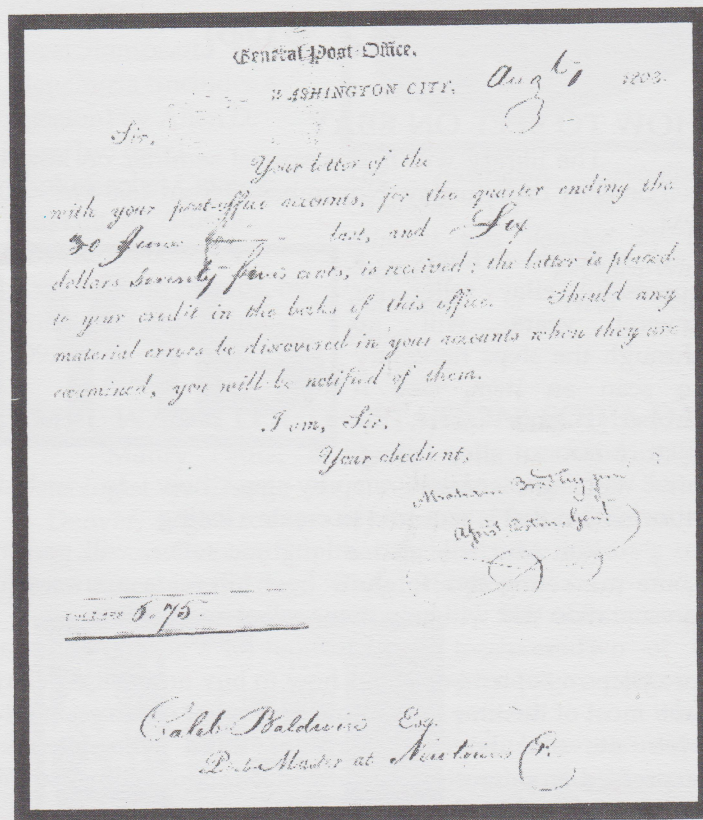


The seal of the General Post office prior to PMG Amos Kendall's reorganization. The messenger figure was replaced by the post rider.

What we knew as the Post Office Department was part of the Treasury and operated under the name of the General Post Office until it was reorganized in 1836 under the administration of Andrew

Jackson. The new Postmaster General, Amos Kendall, was his campaign manager. Almost ever after, this position was reserved for the individuals who were the closest politically to the president.

Why? Although the federal government was relatively small, the Post Office was becoming a



An 1803 post office memo to Newton, Connecticut, signed by the real organizer of the postal system, Abraham Bradley Jr. He was the Assistant Post Master General and was replaced by Andrew Jackson.

substantial political force within the growing political landscape. As the number of post offices grew from 8000 in 1830 to 13,488 in 1840 the local job of Postmaster became a possible source of both income and influence in the midst of a period of "Hard Times" where currency was scarce.

The reorganization provided that Post Offices would be divided into "classes" based on the salary/commission of the Postmaster based on the volume of mail. All classes where the postmaster made over \$1000 per year required a Presidential appointment! By 1865 this was only 712 of the thousands of post offices.

The Postmaster General appointed all the others.

This led to a substantial political influence throughout the history of the Post Office well into the 20th century until the reorganization under Richard Nixon as the U. S. Postal Service.

Indeed, as we consider the Roosevelt-Farley era one should drop by the RMPL and review Brain C. Baur's book, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Stamps of the United States 1933-45* (Amos Press 1993) to realize that FDR personally approved almost every stamp design issued while he was alive. Perhaps it is time to rehabilitate Old Jim Farley a bit for his role in the stamps we refer to as "Farley's Follies."

Note: To view this article with several more illustrations, and with all illustrations in color, go to the RMPL web site and click on "Current News".

News From the RMPL...

HOW TO SELL ON EBAY

The library will host a special seminar on how to sell on eBay on Saturday, November 20 from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM.

Sergio Lugo, a successful eBay seller for several years, will go through the steps necessary to scan an item, size it properly, and insert the picture into an eBay listing. He will also show step-by-step how to include information that is required to create a listing.



Ron Mitchell, also a longtime seller, will present some marketing tips to show how to create a successful presentation that will help items sell at good prices.

There was a record turnout for a Second Saturday program in September about how to buy and sell on eBay, but most of the time in the hour was spent on accessing the web site and buying. Many of those who attended expressed an interest in learning more about selling, so this special seminar has been arranged.

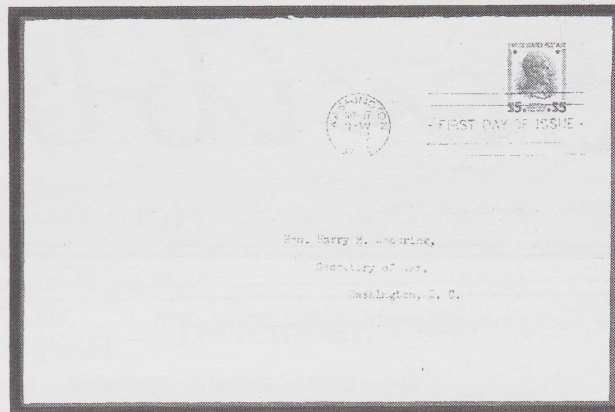
The large turnout meant many people had to be in the back of the room where they had difficulty hearing the presentation. That problem has been solved. (See the next item.)

NEW SOUND SYSTEM

A public address system with a wireless microphone has been installed in the meeting area of the library.

Soft-spoken speakers no longer have to compete with noise from the furnace and air condition units. They can easily be heard at all of the meeting tables and chairs.

The system cost about \$300. If any organizations or members would like to make a specific donation toward the acquisition of the p-a system, it would be appreciated.



A cover sent to the Secretary of War by PMG James Farley as part of a program of providing FDCs to favored politicians and individuals.

END PANELS HAVE ARRIVED

Regular visitors to the library may remember that the new shelving in the main room has not had end panels and had an incomplete "look." While the appearance without end panels was not unattractive, it left a lot to be desired.

New end panels arrived in October and are now in place. Stop by and take a look. The main part of the library now has a more professional look and atmosphere.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

The library's Second Saturday programs continue to be well received by members and guests.

On November 13, Dave Reitsema will tell the story of "Nicholas Seebeck's Stamp Scheme". Then on December 11, Steve Schweighofer and Tonny VanLoij will show "Christkindl, Christmas in Austria."



Stamps featured in November and December Second Saturday programs:

*Left: A Nicholas Seebeck issue from Ecuador.
Right: A Christmas stamp from Austria.*

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE CHANGES

The RMPL will be closed on Veteran's Day (November 11), Thanksgiving Day (November 25), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Please note that there will be no Exhibitor's

Workshop on the 4th Saturday of December (Christmas Day) and there will be no Scandinavian Collector's Club meeting on the 1st Saturday of January (New Year's Day).

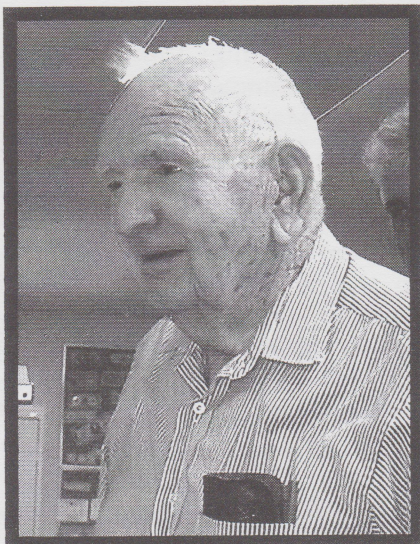
BOB RICHARDSON - IMPORTANT VISITOR

Bob Richardson was an honored guest at the September board meeting of the RMPL.

Bob founded the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden and now lives in Bellefonte, PA, home of the American Philatelic Society. He was also editor of *Linn's Weekly Stamp News* from 1939-1941, so he has many wonderful tales to tell.

Richardson told how *Linn's* was a very small operation around 1940, with George Linn and only three other employees. Circulation was around 25,000.

He said George Linn believed there were a million stamp collectors in the U.S. and figured ten percent of them ought to subscribe. "Linn tried very hard to get a hundred thousand circulation, but of course he never did."



93-year-old Bob Richardson, editor of *Linn's Weekly Stamp News* from 1939-1941, was a recent RMPL visitor.

Richardson said an error made while printing a catalog in 1941 put Linn in bankruptcy, so he (Richardson) went into the Army and when he got out he went to work for a tire company. "It was much more secure financially," he said. "I found out later Linn expected me to come back to work for him, but I was happy where I was."

The last time Richardson visited the RMPL was in 1995. "I'm amazed at what's been done since then," he told the board. "To tell you the truth I thought it would turn into a Saturday morning coffee clatch, a get-together with a few piles of books here and there," he said. "So it's a pleasant surprise, my gosh, to see all this stuff around here."

For more on Bob Richardson's visit to the RMPL, go to the website and click on "Current News".

THANKS FOR DONATIONS

The following people made donations of cash or philatelic materials to the library in August and September. We sincerely thank them for their generosity.

Barbara Anderson, Herman Axelrod, Jan Belle, P. R. Beutel, Don Beuthel, Frank Black, John Bloor, Mrs. Jane Case, William F. Cox, Doug Crowe, William Dorn, Sue Dunn, Helen Epplen, Nolan Flowers, Jr., Rod Haenni,

Glenn Mallory, Pat McNally, Mike Milam, Rhett Morgolin, Dick Ruth, Scandinavian Collectors Club, Rebecca Seaman, Colin Spong, Richard E. Taylor, Jill Tiejn, Steve Turchik and Robert H. Whyte.

NEW BOOKS

Here are a few of the titles that are new to the library shelves in recent weeks:

Here Comes the Mail, by Robert Israeli, 1940.

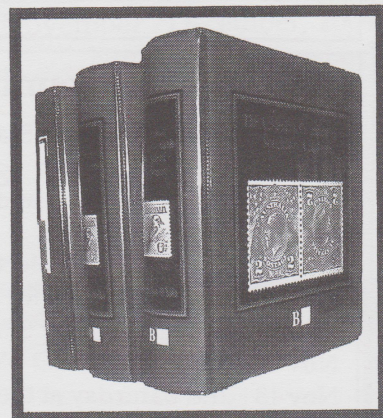
The Congress Book 2003, edited by Richard W. Helbock.

The Local Overprinted Stamps of Manchuria 1945-1947, by Allen D. Kerr, 1975.

Local Stamps of Manchuria (includes a revision) by Allen D. Kerr, [no date].

Photo Cachet Catalog: Linprint, by Allison Cusick, 1976.

The Zeppelin Stamps, by Donald J. Lehmkuhl, 1992.



The Australian Specialists' Catalogue (11 parts in 3 volumes) was donated by the publisher, Brusden-White Publishing of New South Wales.

RMPL WAS 'CLOUD 9 STATION' FOR A DAY

Maury Pautz, a library volunteer and retired Meteorologist in Charge for the National Weather Service in Denver, organized a very special "Second Saturday" program on October 9th that included the library's own postal cancel for the day, "Cloud 9 Station."



Cloudscape photographers Dr. Richard Keen (left) and Carlye Calvin (right) with RMPL board member Maury Pautz, organizer of the October "Second Saturday" program.

He also arranged to have two of the photographers present whose pictures were used on four of the 15 stamps in the Cloudscapes pane issued on October 4th. Maury also gave the program, "Ten Reasons to Look Up." We congratulate him for putting together one of the best "Second Saturday" programs ever.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

We are pleased to welcome the following new member who joined in September.

Walt Smith

What's happening at the RMPL...

"Come and enjoy the activities."

Monday.....10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Thursday.....2:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Tuesday.....10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Friday.....10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Closed Sundays and Holidays

Wednesday....10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Saturday.....10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

November, 2004

- Nov 3 - Meeting - Aurora Stamp Club
6:30 PM Trading;
7:30 PM Meeting and Program
- Nov 6 - Meeting - 10 AM
Scandinavian Collectors Club
- Nov 10 - Meeting - 7:00 PM
Denver Germany Stamp Club
- Nov 11 - RMPL CLOSED - VETERAN'S DAY**
- Nov 13 - 2nd Saturday at the RMPL - 9 AM
Program by Dave Reitsemá
"Nicholas Seebeck and his Stamp Scheme"
- Nov 13 - Meeting - 10:00 AM
Mexico / Latin America Study Group
- Nov 13 - Meeting - 11:30 AM
Rocky Mountain Aerophilatelists
- Nov 13 - Meeting - 2:00 PM
Universal Ship Cancellation Society
U.S.S. Colorado Chapter
- Nov 20 - Meeting - 2:00 PM
Russia Study Group
- Nov 23 - Meeting - 7:30 PM
Rocky Mountain Stamp Show Committee
- Nov 25 - RMPL CLOSED - THANKSGIVING DAY**
- Nov 27 - Workshop - 10 AM
RMSS/RMPL Exhibiting Workshop
- Nov 27 - Meeting - 1:00 PM
China Stamp Society

December, 2004

- Dec 1 - Meeting - Aurora Stamp Club
Annual Holiday Party
Info: Tom Surprenant - 303.341.9997
- Dec 4 - Meeting - 10 AM
Scandinavian Collectors Club
- Dec 4 - Meeting - 1:00 PM
Colorado Postal History Society
- Dec 8 - Meeting - 7:00 PM
Denver Germany Stamp Club
- Dec 11 - 2nd Saturday at the RMPL - 9 AM
Program by Steve Schweighofer and
Tonny VanLoij
"Christkindl, Christmas in Austria"
- Dec 11 - Meeting - 10:00 AM
Mexico / Latin America Study Group
- Dec 11 - Meeting - 2:00 PM
Universal Ship Cancellation Society
U.S.S. Colorado Chapter
- Dec 18 - Meeting - 2:00 PM
Russia Study Group
- Dec 24 - RMPL CLOSED - CHRISTMAS EVE**
Dec 25 - RMPL CLOSED - CHRISTMAS DAY
Dec 31 - RMPL CLOSED - NEW YEAR'S EVE
Jan 1 - RMPL CLOSED - NEW YEAR'S DAY

Monthly Stamp Show Schedule...

November 5 - 6 OKPEX November 6 - 7 - Albuquerque Stamp and Postcard Fall Expo

November 6

Colorado Stamp Show, Embassy Suites Hotel - Southeast, 7525 E Hampden A, Denver, CO, Contact: 20th Century Classics - Pat Dowling, P.O. Box 7536, Colorado Springs CO 80933, 719.598.7307 -
20thonline@adelphia.net

December 4

Colorado Stamp Show, Embassy Suites Hotel - Southeast, 7525 E Hampden A, Denver, CO, Contact: 20th Century Classics - Pat Dowling, P.O. Box 7536, Colorado Springs CO 80933, 719.598.7307 -
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Scribblings is published bimonthly by the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, 2038 So. Pontiac Way, Denver, CO 80224.

The Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library is a chartered Colorado nonprofit corporation. Membership subscriptions over that for the annual regular membership, and donations of appropriate philatelic materials, are deductible for U.S. income tax purposes. The RMPL is an Internal Revenue Service designated 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

RMPL Board of Directors

President and *Scribblings* Editor: Ron Mitchell - Operations Manager: Don Beuthel - Vice-President: Jim Kilbane - Corresponding Secretary: Robert Brown - Recording Secretary: Maury Pautz - Treasurer: Robert Blatherwick - Members at Large: Tim Bartshe - Sergio Lugo - James L. Ozment - Steve Schweighofer - Jack Willard (Emeritus)