

Stamp Tracks



NEWS AND
INFORMATION FOR
PHILATELISTS OF ALL AGES

A Brief History of the Universal Postal Union

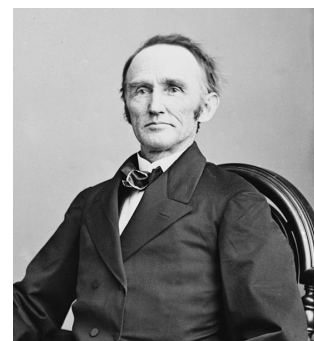
By Douglas Files *This is an abridged version of his article.*

Fifteen years after the United States began to issue stamps in 1847 some American politicians took a leading role in updating international mail delivery. One was an Iowa delegate to the Republican National Convention in the United States, John A. Kasson. At the 1860 convention Kasson had been the main architect of Abraham Lincoln's platform, including the anti-slavery positions. When Lincoln was elected president he appointed Kasson First Assistant Postmaster General.



John Kasson

Two years later John Kasson was elected a congressman from Iowa. From his new position he lobbied Lincoln's Postmaster General Montgomery Blair to convene a meeting of industrial nations to set postal standards. Blair was convinced of the utility of this idea and Secretary of State William Seward arranged a major meeting in Europe. Fifteen nations sent representatives to Paris, France to discuss simplifying postal rates and treaties. In the end some postal standards were



Montgomery Blair

simplified but the major obstacles could not be overcome. The nations would not agree to similar standards. Still, the stage was set for further cooperation in the future.

Ten years passed. Germany won the Franco-Prussian war and the various German principalities united into an empire. When that occurred the German reichspost established common rates for the entire empire. Especially Germans, but also other nations' postal officials had a chance to see the economies of scale which could be achieved by consolidating postal regulations. As a consequence, the mishmash of existing international agreements seemed old-fashioned. A new champion arose. Heinrich von Stephan of the North German Confederation postal system drew up the outline of a reform plan. In 1873 the Swiss government organized another major meeting in Bern and 22 nations sent representatives.

The delegates negotiated in earnest and made difficult compromises. Eventually they arrived at an agreement. The 12-page treaty which resulted formed the basis for the "General Postal Union". The treaty was signed on the 9th of October 1874 and went into effect the following year.

The name General Postal Union was optimistically changed four years later to the Universal Postal Union to encourage more countries to join. October 9th is now celebrated as World Post Day and Heinrich von Stephan is celebrated as the founder of the UPU.

Continued on page 5





Postal History Foundation

920 North 1st Avenue
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520-623-6652

www.postalhistoryfoundation.org

Email us at: info@phftucson.org

Library, Museum, Post Office Hours:

Monday through Friday except Federal Holidays 8:30am-2:30pm

Administrative Assistant

Kelzi Bartholomaei x 100

The Slusser Library

Arielle Garcia x 107
Check the calendar for reservations

Stamp Discovery Education Program

Lisa Dembowski x 102
education@phftucson.org
Education Assistant—Kat Wahl

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Book Specials from the Sales Shop

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Lick'em, Stick'em: The Lost Art of Poster Stamps

by Thomas H. Stelle 1989 \$10

Minkus, The New American Stamp Catalog

1959 Edition Blue Cloth Fine in lightly worn dustwrapper \$5

The Private Local Posts of the United States: New York State

by Donald Scott Patton 1967 Green cloth, gilt spine \$25

O'Brian, Guardians of the Eighth Sea: A History of the U.S. Coast Guard on the Great Lakes

n.j, n.d. Red paper cover printed in black \$2

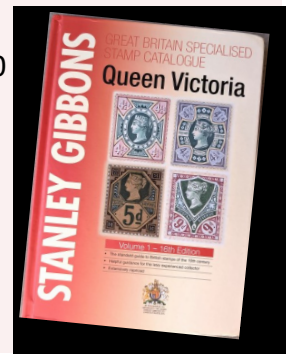
The Postal History of the Canadian Contingents Anglo Boer War, 1899 - 1902

1981 Red textured buckram/gilt letter \$10

Stanley Gibbons Catalogue: Queen Victoria

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Call 520623-6652 x 101 David Irick



From the Treasurer

Thanks to all our renewing members to date:

- Should you be a past member who has not renewed for 2025 ... please do so now.
- Our needs in these times are substantial.
- Please be generous and move your membership to a higher level.

Your dollars allow us to support our active Stamp Discovery program and the Slusser Library as we promote philatelic learning and inspire future generations.



The children, teachers, and parents thank you!

We Thank the Behnkes for Their Service



Barrett and Nancy Behnke have served the youth of our Stamp Discovery program for about 20 years. They have now moved to Mesa, Arizona to enjoy their children, four grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. We are sad to see them go, but happy for them.

Over the years they have been integral to the smooth function of our education program. For several years Barrett came in twice a week to work on the commemoratives and other donations. Nancy would come in once a week to put various packets of lessons together for the students, amongst other tasks. Recently we have been dropping off supplies to them at their apartment.

The Behnkes had set up a rolling shelf system containing boxes of glassine envelopes for U.S. commemoratives, all labeled with Scott numbers. They would literally sort stamps every night into these glassines which were destined for the education filing cabinet room. The education files contain millions of stamps used in lessons and topical requests sent across the country.

They are such a fabulous duo. Barrett constructed many stamp treasure chests that have been used in local libraries and also at community events. Nancy would collage them with used stamps from around the world. These chests spread the joy of collecting to all that look inside. They can be addictive to stamp hunters.

A big thank you to these two for their loyalty and support. We wish Nancy and Barrett happiness as they enjoy their family. **(Not to worry, Nancy is still making stamp lesson sets for us at home. We mail homework to several volunteers.)**



Above, one of many beautiful treasure chests that Barrett and Nancy produced. This chest contains approximately 50,000 stamps.

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IBM Volunteers Give Education a Boost

Our local IBM volunteers blessed us with their presence again this past November 1, 2024. Every year they take a day to help out our Stamp Discovery youth program during the United Way Days of Caring Tucson and Southern Arizona event.

This group of dedicated volunteers are fun to be around and so happy to perform the tasks that are needed to prepare packets for student use across the county. The used postage stamps they sort and/or gather for lessons provide a unique and educational way of learning about United States history and culture, math, science, art, geography, and more.

Some volunteers prepared packets of stamps for nine specific lessons while others sorted and separated Transportation and Great American definitive series stamps for filing and future use in lessons.

In approximately five hours the volunteers used 20,000 specific stamps to prepare 1,790 packets which will be used by students across the country. Thank you for performing this essential work for our program!



Remembering Paul Gohdes, Past Education Director

We recently received word that past volunteer and director of our education program, Paul Gohdes, has passed away. Paul helped with the youth program in the late 90's and the early 2000's.

After moving to Tucson in 1995, Paul was "overjoyed" to discover the Postal History Foundation. He had collected stamps since he was in middle school. Paul immediately began volunteering by visiting schools with Ranyta Sullivan who was in charge of the youth education program at the time. Paul became the director after Ranyta passed away in 2003. He had very fond memories of the various teachers and schools that he visited. Sometimes his wife, Dolores, accompanied Paul to the classrooms to help out. They enjoyed their volunteer time at the PHF over the years and also soaked stamps at home for the program. Paul served as the director of the youth program until he decided to relinquish the reins in about 2005/2006. Paul and



Paul and Dolores at a volunteer luncheon.

Dolores, continued to volunteer at ARIPEX and attend annual luncheons after he retired from the director position. In 2012 they moved back to be with their family in Wisconsin.

Paul always felt that using stamps as educational tools was a wonderful and unique way for children to learn a subject. "It was always a pleasure to have Paul visit us at school. He captivated the students with amazing stories," said Karen Gabino, who was the librarian at Twin Peaks Elementary and is now a volunteer.

We have fond memories of both Paul and Dolores and thank them for their many years of dedication to the youth program. *Thank you to Dolores for some of the information above.*

UPU *continued*

Heinrich von Stephan



The main idea of the fledgling organization was that the 22 countries in the union would consider themselves all part of one large postal territory inside of which the same rates and rules would apply. The new standards were useful to both customers and postal clerks. Previously, not only had every set of two countries set up their own bilateral postal rates, but depending on the route the mail traveled, several different rates might apply. Under the UPU's new system the rate to send a letter less than 15 grams (about a half ounce) was standardized. That is, to send a letter from member nations such as from the U.S. to Norway or from Greece to Russia would cost approximately the same amount.

Because the international diplomatic language was French in 1874 the rate was set in French money at around 25 centimes. Each nation translated this amount into their own money. Moreover, if the letter had to travel over 300 nautical miles by ship, the postal services could charge an extra fee to pay the ship captain. The fee just could not exceed half of the normal international rate in that nation. Interestingly, French continued to serve as the working language of the UPU until 1994 when English began to be permitted.

The UPU's simplifications greatly eased international mail delivery and it was able to set standards which applied nearly everywhere. Overall the UPU functioned so smoothly - and so much better than the prior mess - that more and more nations joined it. After World War II the UPU became part of the United Nations.

Currently the UPU system covers 192 nations—the entire world except for a few very small countries. According to its website, the UPU “sets the rules for international mail exchanges and makes recommendations to stimulate growth in mail, parcel and financial services volumes and improve quality of service for customers.” The Universal Postal Union remains a key part of the international mail system and it is actively working toward a safer and more effective mail delivery worldwide.

*Read the unabridged article by Doug Files on our website. The **Philatelic Articles** page is found under the Library section on our website at www.postalhistoryfoundation.org.*



Design of Swiss Scott# 901 01, right, after the UPU Monument that can be seen in Bern, Switzerland, at left.



Welcome to our New Slusser Librarian

Arielle Garcia was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona. She earned her Bachelor's in Studio Art in the fall of 2019 and her Master's in Library and Information Science in the fall of 2020. After graduation, Arielle worked as an Instruction and Reference Librarian at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, AZ.

After a year and a half of enduring the Phoenix heat, she returned home to accept the position of Librarian and Archivist at the Postal History Foundation. Ironically, one of her first jobs involved unloading postal service containers, a role she loved, which created a full-circle moment in her career.

One of Arielle's favorite events so far has been the Stamp Discovery activity at the PBS Kids Day event at the Children's Museum. She loves working with children and found it rewarding to introduce them

to postal history and stamps. Inspired by this success, Arielle helped organize a Letters to Santa event at the Peggy Slusser Library this past December. The event featured activities like creating holiday cards and postcards, as well as exploring festive holiday stamps. Arielle hopes to organize more events that align with the foundation's mission to connect people with valuable information through print, visual, and electronic resources, supporting philatelists, historians, genealogists, and the public.

In her spare time, Arielle enjoys spending time with her family and engaging in creative hobbies such as leatherwork, reading, completing jigsaw puzzles, and listening to music.



Arielle at her desk in the Slusser Library.

New on the Shelf

New on the Shelf, Courtesy of the John Wynn Donation

- *Japanese Postage Stamps in the Manufacture* by the Insatsukyoko Choyokai Foundation (1975)
- *The Foreign Mail Cancellations of New York City, 1870–1878* by William R. Weiss (1990)
- *Malta: The Stamps and Postal History, 1576–1960* edited by R. E. Martin (1980)
- *The Stamps of the Levant Post Offices* by Douglas Brawn Armstrong (1972)
- *East Africa: the story of East Africa and its stamps* by James A. Mackay (1970)
- *Territorial Assiniboia Saskatchewan the Westhaver -Thompson Collection* by Rosemary Gray (1990)
- *Transvaal Philately* by Ian Mathews (1986)



Spreading Stamp Joy Around the Community

Over the past few months we have participated in annual community events as well as receiving children at our facility for field trips. Arielle Garcia, our Slusser Librarian, has been a great help to me as we spread the joy of stamp collecting to kids of all ages.



In Tucson, the weather is usually fairly nice for these outdoor community events which included:

Children’s Museum Tucson Love of Literacy Day: Wilbur, the University of Arizona Wildcat mascot, graced us with his presence as hundreds of families looked in our stamp treasure chests throughout the day to complete a scavenger hunt. (right top and bottom)

Kids line up every year at the train depot to see Santa and write him letters which they deposit in our mailbox. (bottom middle and left)

Classes from various schools visit us for fun-filled field trips of writing and mailing postcards, and numerous educational activities using stamps, postmarks, and more. (top left)

Please continue to support our educational programs with your monetary and philatelic donations!

Thank you and Happy New Year!



PHF Calendar

Board Meeting
January 25, 2025
9am in the Slusser Library

Visiting the PHF

Open M-F 8:30am - 2:30pm
with some exceptions.
At times the library and/or
museum may be temporarily
unavailable on the day of
scheduled field trips, meetings,
and large group tours. Please
check the online calendar or
call
520-623-6652 x 100 or x107

Our online public calendar is
found on our website at:
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click on **Latest** → then click on
Event Calendar OR
[postalhistoryfoundation.org/
visit/calendar/](http://postalhistoryfoundation.org/visit/calendar/)

Slusser Exhibit

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Member

Maurice Wainwright
Member

Tucson Stamp Club

The club is currently meeting
at the
Fraternal Order of
Police Lodge on
3445 N Dodge Blvd, 85716

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520-574-5535