

Stamp Tracks



NEWS AND
INFORMATION FOR
PHILATELISTS OF ALL AGES

Definitive Details:

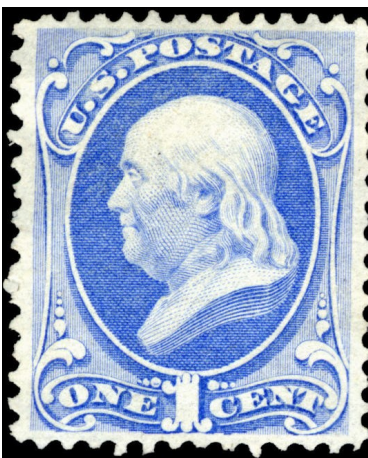
The Large Banknote Series of 1870

By Douglas Files

The U.S. Banknote series of 1870-1893 is a definitive series with many varieties. The long tenure of this colorful series led to the issuance of plenty of subtypes, which have long been studied and collected. The primary differences among the stamps involve color, paper type, grills and the so-called “secret marks” which one printing company included. Much of the variation that occurred arose from three different companies being involved in the printing of the large banknote series: the National, Continental and American Bank Note Companies.

The initial contract for printing the large banknote series was awarded to the National Bank Note Company. Their first printings of the series were on a “hard”, white paper. Some of the stamps were “grilled” with an embossing machine to make it difficult to wash off cancellations and re-use the stamps. Grilled copies are tougher to find than ungrilled copies.

After three years the National Bank Note Company lost its contract to a lower bidder. The torch was passed to the Continental Bank Note Company to continue printing these definitives. To distinguish its stamps from its competitor’s stamps, Continental made intentional changes to several designs. Philatelists call these changes “secret marks”. An example of a secret mark is the crescent in the pearl to the left of the numeral “1” on the 1-cent Franklin stamp.



**Benjamin Franklin 1-cent
Large Bank Note Stamp**

Image from the National Postal Museum website, https://postalmuseum.si.edu/object/npm_1980.2493.1056



**Oliver Hazard Perry Large
Bank Note Stamp**

Image from the National Postal Museum website, https://postalmuseum.si.edu/object/npm_1980.2493.1056

The Continental Bank Note Company also used different paper types than the National Bank Note Company had. For example, a 24-cent Continental stamp exists on ribbed paper and a “special printing” was done on bright, white wove paper.

In 1877 the U.S. Congress determined that all paper money would be produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Postage stamps would still be produced by contractors, but the private currency industry collapsed very quickly. In 1877 the National, Continental and American Bank Note Companies joined to become one company. The new conglomerate was called the

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Postal History Foundation

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Email us at: info@phftucson.org

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Monday through Friday except
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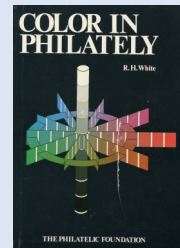
PHF Officers and Board:

Chair: Bob Davis
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John Carney, James Green,
Max Schwartz

Library News

Arielle Garcia library@phftucson.org

Looking for a great addition to your library? The Postal History Foundation currently has a selection of books available for sale covering a variety of philatelic and postal history topics. The books are organized into three categories—U.S., Foreign, and General—making it easy to browse and discover something new for your collection. A full list of books for sale can also be found on our website at postalhistoryfoundation.org.



To purchase a book, simply visit the Foundation in person, call **520-622-6652 ext. 107**, or email library@phftucson.org. Shipping is available for an additional fee. If you have questions or need help searching the book sale catalog by title, author, or keyword, Librarian **Arielle** will be happy to assist.

Selected Titles from the Book Sales List:

- **The United States Commemorative Stamps of the Twentieth Century, Vol. I-II** — Max G. Johl; Beverly S. King. H. L. Lindquist, New York, 1947.
- **Color in Philately** - R. H. White, Philatelic Foundation 1979
- **Pictorial Treasury of U.S. Stamps** — Elena Marzulla; Richard Bouma; Duane Hillmer. Collectors Institute, Omaha, NE, 1974.
- **Butterfield Overland Mail Across Arizona, 1858–1861: A Centennial Publication for Members of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society** — Arizona Silhouettes; Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. Arizona Silhouettes, c1961.
- **Stanley Gibbons Falkland Islands and British South Atlantic Islands Stamp Catalogue** — Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd. Stanley Gibbons, London, 1985.

Visit our Sales Department Collections, Covers, Albums, Supplies, and MORE

- | | |
|---|---|
| • World Wide Stamps 50% SCV or less | • Foreign Platinum Mines 4 oz off paper SCV \$0.50 to \$10.00 each stamp/set - \$135 |
| • US Plate Blocks /Booklets | • Foreign Titanium Mines SCV per stamp \$10.00 minimum - no weight limit \$225.00 |
| • Foreign Gold Mines 4 to 5 oz off paper \$25.00 | |
| • Discount Postage — 40% discount of face | |
| • Philatelic Books | |

Changes Coming to the PHF



I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to take a moment to share some important and exciting news about recent and coming changes at the Postal History Foundation. Our Board of Trustees has thoughtfully worked to enhance our mission and vision to better prepare us for a more successful future. As a result, we are embarking on a new chapter for our organization.

One of the most significant changes is that we are adopting a new name—*National Postal Education Center*—to better reflect our renewed focus and direction.

Our enhanced mission statement now reads: *The mission of the National Postal Education Center is to inspire and educate people using the amazing range of topics and learning opportunities the world of stamps and postal history provides.* To pursue this mission, the Center offers educational programs, a philatelic library-archives-museum complex, and sales of stamps and related materials to collectors everywhere.

And our vision is: To be seen regionally as a premier nonprofit institution with special focus on youth education using the learning opportunities available through the world of stamps and postal history.

This transition to embrace these important changes will be implemented in phases, and we'll be keeping you informed along the way, including posting updates on our website.

In addition to these changes, we are planning to remodel our sales area. The goal is to make it even easier for our members and guests to discover and purchase philatelic treasures. We're excited about these improvements and confident they'll enhance everyone's experience.

There are also some bittersweet changes on the personnel front. Our dedicated Education Director, Lisa Dembowski, and Treasurer, Ted Maynard, are retiring. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their years of service and unwavering commitment to the Foundation, and we wish them all the best as they embark on new adventures.

While we expect this transition to go smoothly, we recognize that some adjustments will be necessary along the way. We are committed to minimizing any disruptions in service, and we see this as a wonderful opportunity and time for you volunteering to support us during this time of change.

Thank you all for your continued enthusiasm and support. We're looking forward to a bright future together and can't wait to share more updates soon.

Bob Davis, Chairman

*Thank you for
renewing!*

Annual Membership Renewal 2026

To our past members who missed a year... Please rejoin to support our important work here at the Postal History Foundation.

Our needs in these times are substantial. Please be generous and "consider upgrading" 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!

A Love Letter to the Postal History Foundation

This edition of Stamp Tracks is my last official task as Education Director of our education program, Stamp Discovery. Little snapshots of wonderful experiences from these past 18½ years float through my mind. As a farewell, I will remind you of our accomplishments, services, and how your support translates to resources provided to students throughout the country and world. Since 1964, the PHF has offered our unique philatelic learning experience to anyone, anywhere, especially children. What was once a wonderful learning opportunity for local asthmatic children and eventually local school districts has grown to a nationwide opportunity for students during my tenure.

Stamp Discovery Provides the Following to Students

- Educator’s Store online
- Downloadable lessons
- Idea sheets and activity sheets online
- 110 Lessons with stamp packets for orders
- Topicals on stamps for order online
- Topical request letter service for kids
- Field trips for schools and home schoolers
- Tours for community organizations
- Activities at community events
- Visits to classrooms, libraries, museums
- Scout merit badge workshops
- Tucson Birthday Contests
- Treasure chests full of stamps
- Stamp Collecting Starter Kits
- Books, special collections, FDCs, etc.

During the past 18 years more than **8.5 million** stamps have been provided by the Stamp Discovery program to more than **225,000** students. With the use of computers and the internet since 2007, our program participation has expanded greatly. We can only made an educated guess about how high the true numbers have been for the past 60 years, before the use of computers and spread sheets. I feel that our small non-profit has accomplished much since its inception. And more will be accomplished.

Philatelic donations, monetary donations, and memberships help feed the supply of learning tools we provide to students. Stamps (mint and used), FDCs, postcards, collections, books, beginning albums, souvenir sheets, stock sheets, mounts, catalogs, hinges, and more, all can be passed on to the students. **We continue to need your support.**

Our educational work at the PHF is accomplished because of volunteers. In the front sections of the main building more than 20 volunteers and staff help process philatelic donations received from across the country. Donations are used for sales to collectors, which help keep the lights on, while others are passed to our Slusser library. An even larger amount are sent to the recesses of the building where education volunteers and staff work their magic. These volunteers work incredibly hard to fill orders, gather topical stamps, make stamp packets for lessons, sort stamps, soak stamps, file stamps, mail orders, and more! Numerous tasks are performed to supply the resources we send to parents, teachers, and other educational professionals who inspire learning via stamps. Stamps teach us all, no matter what age. They connect us to history, geology, geography, nature, science, art, math, music, cultures, government, and more. Learning with stamps provides unlimited possibilities for people to better understand this world we live in, and expand our intelligence.

The many years working along side the staff, volunteers, and board members have been very enjoyable. There has been a lot of good laughter. Continue with the great work that you do. I have fond memories of those who have retired, moved, or passed away. I love you all and thank you for your support and help over the years to conduct our education mission.

I will miss this unique place of work, I was allowed the flexibility to write lessons for use with stamps, and create activities for field trips and school events using postal history. Watching lightbulbs go off in student minds as they make connections with the world via philately is very rewarding.

Life has changed a great deal since I started in 2007. Our increasingly complicated world requires new, younger, blood to carry on the mission. We have a start with our fabulous librarian, Arielle Garcia, but we also need “new blood” and fresh ideas at all levels of the organization.

I will especially miss our education volunteers and staff, who are pictured below. Special thanks to our awesome Education Assistant, Kat Wahl, who has been so dependable and kept us organized. These volunteers keep the vision alive. They care so much about the students and their stamp requests! Working with them has given me thousands of happy days. And, of course, how could I forget our mascot, Mita. *Love, Lisa Dembowski*



Continued from page 1

American Bank Note Company and it continued Continental's contract to print U.S. stamps.

As a cost-saving measure American used Continental's engraved plates to print the definitive stamp series. But the conglomerate used different paper, which is called "soft, porous paper". Soft, porous paper generally appears translucent and mottled or quilted when held up to a light source. The so-called "hard" paper is stiffer, whiter and opaque. Some collectors "flick" the edges of stamps and can appreciate the difference between hard and soft paper that way.

In 1883 the common letter rate was decreased to 2 cents per half ounce, which drove a need for new denominations. Thus that year a 2-cent red-brown Washington was issued as well as a 4-cent blue-green Jackson stamp. From 1880 to 1884 some low-quantity "special printings" were produced, resulting in further scarce subtypes of bank note stamps. In 1890 the small bank notes – the next definitive series - began to be issued. The designs were similar but the size of the stamps was reduced, hence the name "small". In 1893 the large bank note series was discontinued.

Denominations and Honorees Featured in the Large Bank Note Series

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1-Cent Benjamin Franklin | 10-Cent Thomas Jefferson |
| 2-Cent Andrew Jackson | 12-Cent Senator Henry Clay |
| 3-Cent George Washington | 15-Cent Senator Daniel Webster |
| 5-Cent Zachary Taylor | 24-Cent General Winfield Scott |
| 6-Cent Abraham Lincoln | 30-Cent Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton |
| 7-Cent Secretary of War Edwin Stanton | 90-Cent Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry |

Overview

If you are intrigued by U.S. stamps from the 1800s then the Large Bank Note series has much to offer you. It exists in a wide range of papers, colors and grills. You can even identify "secret marks" with a magnifying glass. The series is brightly-colored and affordable. For an added challenge collect covers bearing these stamps and seek fancy cancels or colored cancels. A beautiful, engraved series awaits.....

We thank Mr. Files for his always interesting articles and support of the PHF throughout the years.

Stamp Shows Provide Source of Income, Publicity, and Donations

The annual **Arizona National Stamp Show** was held this past February 13-15 at the Double Tree by Hilton in Mesa, Arizona. The show featured more than 20 philatelic dealers and over 50 exhibit frames.

Attendees totaled 1,100 on Friday and over 1,200 attendees on Saturday. The PHF tables were busy with collectors and our volunteers sold many covers and postcards. Enough money to pay expenses was collected. We did receive seven donations during the show, made some new friends which may become members, and were very happy to see our returning customers. Many thanks to David and Linda Irick for their help in organizing and manning the tables during the show.

The PHF also attends the **Arizona First Saturday Stamp Show** at Burgess Hall in the Scottsdale United Methodist Church in Scottsdale, Arizona. The show is a profitable monthly venue for our sales people. David Irick, Linda Irick, and Paul Czopek, faithfully pack up items the Friday before and are ready for business by 8 a.m. on Saturday.

Philippines Celebrates 80 Year Anniversary

The Philippine Consulate General paid a visit to the Postal History Foundation this past January to make an official presentation to the Postal History Foundation. Mike Wood, vice-chairman of the PHF was presented Philippines stamps and a special first day of issue cover commemorating the 80 year anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations by Consulate General Adelio Cruz. "The Philippines are very proud to be one of the original signees of the UN Charter," explained Consulate General Cruz, who traveled to Tucson for the presentation.

The Honorary Consul, Jenny Lynn M. Ho-Vijungco, from Phoenix, was in attendance with several staff including, Consul Francis Maynard Maleon.

From left to right: Consulate General Adelio Angelito S. Cruz, Mike Wood, Jenny Lynn M. Ho-Vijungco, and Francis Maynard Maleon. Below are Philippines stamps and first day cover issued June 26, 2025.



Our volunteers receive donations of stamps and supplies at every show we attend as the PHF is well known for our youth program.

Thank you Volunteers!

New Members

Carl Boswell
Oro Valley, AZ

Maish Clint
Santa Fe, NM

Alexander Hall
Tallahassee, FL

Marc Hall
Mount Lake Terrace, WA

George Killat
Midland, MI

Silvia Mieure
Green Valley, AZ

In Memoriam

Robert Lee
Member, Volunteer

C. Robert Pursley
Member

You are holding the **Stamp Tracks** in your hands, but you can also view it and older issues on our website at:

postalhistoryfoundation/about/stamp-tracks-newsletter

PHF Calendar

Board Meetings
Every Third Wednesday of
the month at 1pm in the
Slusser Library

April 22

May 20

June 17

Slusser Exhibit

New exhibit is coming soon.

Please call the Slusser library for the date of the new exhibit.

Visit our permanent and rotating exhibits in person or explore them online at our website under

Museum > Permanent Exhibits or
Museum > Rotating Exhibit

Visiting the PHF

Open M-F 8:30am - 2:30pm
except Federal Holidays.

Call ahead for temporary
library closures due to events.
postalhistoryfoundation.org

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Tucson Stamp Club

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Tucson, AZ 85756

For more information contact:

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