

# The Cover Story

## A Difficult and Sad Collection to Purchase by Phil Fettig

Most of us wanted to be a stamp dealer at one time or another. Ann and I both collected stamps long before we met and even visited LeDuc's, a famous store in St. Petersburg during our dating period. Later on, around the mid 1970's the idea became a dream with some plans attached. In 1979, Fettig Stamps did a show and over the years that name was changed to Dolphin Stamps and Dolphin Covers. During that period, in 1984, Ann went to work for a store in Kissimmee, A & R Stamp & Coin. In 1985 she became a partner and from January, 2001, to her retirement in July, 2008, the sole owner. Now we are no longer competing and are back doing shows together as A & R Stamps. That time frame has been full of good times and some that were difficult and even sad.

Both of us have had to face widows, or other family members, and discuss purchase terms of the deceased collector's material. Most of the time the surviving family member is sorrowful over the passing of the collector. However, there have been a few instances that anger might be present due to the money and time spent on a "wasteful" hobby like stamp collecting. Sometimes the seller has no idea what the material is worth and is in for a pleasant surprise. The other side of that circumstance is the highly inflated value they, or the original collector, has placed on the holdings. As you can see, sometimes it is a pleasure to deal with people and other meetings can be termed as painful.

All of this leads us to the most difficult situation we ever faced. What could be worse than one of your best customers calls up and says he needs to dispose of his many collections because he has a terminal illness?

Mr. "Doe" had been a customer at A & R for a long time. He also was active in obtaining material from many other sources as we learned later. When Ann got the call she arranged an appointment at a time for me to do the evaluation since it was primarily early U.S. material. Upon arriving at his home I sat and listened to Mr. Doe explain his situation. His main goal was to leave his family in the best financial shape as possible and Mr. Doe believed the best way to accomplish that was to handle the sale of his collections now, while he could play an active part, rather than wait for later.

The main collection was the United States in several albums. The singles started with a nice used Scott No. 1 & 2 and ranged up to what was considered as postage. **Figure (1) [on front cover]** shows the #2. The early pages were not complete by any means, but neither were they sparse. In an unusual set of circumstances, some of the early sets of definitives were missing the lower (and inexpensive) values but the high end values such as twenty-four cents and ninety cents were present. Now, for one of those difficult but important moments – just because the owner is a good customer and is facing difficult times, you cannot let your emotions rule your judgment. I took extensive notes on the condition of the material as well as



Figure (2)

measurements, especially on the Washington-Franklin coils. **Figures (2) & (3)** are prime examples of a couple (Scott 338 & 449) of the problematic W/F items that may – or may not be real; they will have to be sent for certification. For those of you who do not collect those coils, the rate of altered sheet stamps made to look like coils is extremely high. It was at this point I realized Mr

Figure (3)



Doe had been very active in obtaining material from various sources. It did not take an abundance of philatelic skill to recognize a beautiful example of the White Plains Sheet, Scott #630 and a vf set of zepps, C13-15. Other albums contained a nice run of plate blocks starting in the Scott late #400 – #500 range and, once again, working up into the era of common postage. One I particularly remember fondly was a choice plate block of

six of Scott 621, the five cent Norse American issue. The centering was superb to say the least. I was almost sorry to see it sell, but it went to a plate block collector and that is where it belonged. Another nice item, shown in **Figure (4) [on front cover]** is a plate block of Scott 835, the Five Dollar value of the 1938 Presidential Series. Back of the Book material was well represented with revenues, newspapers, ducks and many others.

Mr. Doe not only enjoyed U.S. material ranging from the difficult to the common, he also was a prolific topical collector. **Figures (5) and (6A & 6B) [on front cover]** show items from his ten volumes of Disney and eight volumes of Scouting material. Over the years parts of these two collections have gone to collectors from North to South Florida and hopefully have provided the same satisfaction that Mr. Doe experienced.

Time fades the memory of some of the lesser items although I do remember a small Canada collection as well as something from the "Sand Dune" area. At times it seemed like Mr. Doe had collecting interest from one end of a set of Scott Catalogs to the other!

After several days of market research we completed our estimate which resulted in Ann calling Mr. Doe with a five figure offer. He accepted and thanked us for helping him and his family during an extremely difficult period. Ann received word of his passing before the year was up.

The next installment may take an extra month to accomplish. With my annual work week on a submarine approaching, preparing a meeting program and SUNPEX after that, it is going to get a little busy. How about some of the rest of you? There has to be a story or two out there to help our hard working editor!

*[The Editor is happy to report that the Scott #2 has resided in his collection since it was purchased as a birthday gift in the summer of 2002.]*

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## Contest Time!

# "What is it?"

By John C. Robbins

The philatelic item depicted in the adjoining photograph appears to be an ordinary shipping box. Can you guess what was sent in this box?

The answer will appear in a June issue of the Philatelic Missive.

Hint: The edible commercial contents of the box were invented in 1867. The vintage of the box is 1931, or later, and it measures ~14 x 12 x 6".

**The answer is to be submitted in writing to the Editor either via email or in person by 8:15pm on May 7<sup>th</sup>.**



**If there is more than one correct answer – the winner of the \$10 CFSC Door Prize will be determined by a lottery drawing.**