

The Cover Story

IN THE BEGINNING..... by John Letter

[continued from Insert 10.2014a]

What was next?

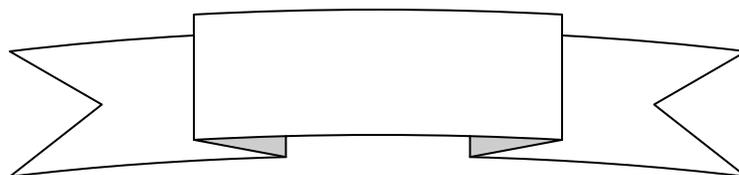
So within a year of its introduction.... the Penny Black was history and gave way to the Penny Red. The Penny Black Plate 11 - this was intended for solely the production of the early reds [Figure 4 on the Front Cover] but somehow was used to produce a small number of blacks. It is well worth looking for these, particularly on cover.

MISNOMER – IS IT A STAMP?

The penny rate (following an experimental, and short lived, four penny rate) was established on January 10th, 1840. Hand stamps [Figure 5 on the Front Cover], with typically black ink, were used to indicate pre-payment. Thus when the adhesives finally came along they were commonly referred to as **stamps** (still used to this day), but which were really ‘**adhesive labels**’.

HOORAY!

The uniform penny rate benefitted many people. Ordinary folk could afford to keep in touch with their kin (at least once a year) or in times of emergency. The Post Office became profitable. The mail routes became better maintained which in turn created jobs. Entrepreneurs saw an opportunity and started to mass produce **envelopes**, which again created jobs etc. etc. Rowland Hill was knighted for his vision. You and I had a fascinating hobby/pastime all these years later!



Future USPS Issues: CFSC Poll Results by John C. Robbins

At the Sept. 4th meeting, the question, “What topic or person, without restriction, would you like to see pictured on a future stamp issued by the USPS?” was asked of the thirty-nine attendees. Of the twelve anonymous respondents, five volunteered that they would like to see a stamp issued to commemorate the recently deceased comedian and actor, Robin Williams. No other topic or person received more than one vote. Votes for topics and people were split nearly evenly, with a total of eighteen different people and fifteen topics nominated.

A handful of nominees included people that are recently deceased: Robin Williams, Shirley Temple, Norman Schwarzkopf, Jr., Joan Rivers, Lauren Bacall, Michael Jackson and Steve Jobs. Nominees Fred Astaire, Bill Tilden, Bobby Fischer, Barbara Stanwyck, Gene Roddenberry, John Enders and Mary Baker Eddy have each been deceased for five years or longer. Three nominees Gordon Moore, Hugh Hefner and Derek Jeter are still with us. If one is to believe web sources, issues for Steve Jobs and Michael Jackson are in the USPS pipeline for 2015.

It is doubtful that the USPS will create philatelic memories of Bobby Fischer. His controversial statements (he voiced strong anti-American and Israeli sentiments later in life,) did not stop Iceland from issuing stamps memorializing his playing career and his triumph in Reykjavik during 1972. It is notable that the USPS has never recognized the game of chess, let alone any American world champion.

The questionnaire responses reflect a market for stamps depicting living Americans. In this light, recent efforts by the USPS to offer stamps that are more appealing to a new generation of collectors are to be applauded. The issuance of eye-popping stamps that depict more current, relevant themes and recognizable cultural icons, e.g. Harry Potter, that compete well with the slick graphics on iPads, are needed to reach potential new collectors. New collectors should create more revenue for a USPS drowning in red ink and the continuance of our beloved hobby. Such a strategy has been successfully employed by many countries who have immediately recognized their citizens' victories in international sports competitions, e.g. in Olympiads.

Notwithstanding these benefits, I am in favor of the old rules: a moratorium on issues commemorating people (except past Presidents) is a prudent approach, as full vetting of nominees' characters can be realized during a five year period. To wit, a stamp that celebrated O.J. Simpson's football career would probably be viewed somewhat differently today. As the saying goes, "Better safe than sorry."

Proposed topics ranged widely: from U.S. Railroads to Street Lamps and State Capitol Domes (an opportunity for another 50 stamp sheet). Logos of Professional Sports Teams, Star Trek, Food Brands, and a 911 semi-postal sheet were also nominated.

In the instances of NFL and MLB Sports Logos and Food Brands, etc., paid advertising on stamps could generate a significant source of revenue for the USPS. In addition, Sports Team Logos offer compelling game day use of two stamps on one cover and se-tenant layouts within sheets.

In that US semi-postal issues can be counted on one hand, another entrant in this space would be welcomed. Stamps depicting the new Freedom Tower, the 911 museum and the WTC memorial could generate meaningful financial assistance to the victims' families.

To formally nominate your idea for a stamp, send a letter to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. Here are the details of how to do it: http://www.ehow.com/how_8103429_nominate-someone-postage-stamp.html.

A petition at a social media site, such as Facebook, can be used to buttress your nomination. In this regard, an on-line petition, including nearly 1700 likes (or approvals) in support of a stamp for the late musician Jerry Garcia exists at the following address: Nominate Jerry Garcia for a Commemorative US Postage Stamp: <https://www.facebook.com/JerryPostageStamp>



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Something to Contemplate

A member of the CFSC recently received a small package from China containing a philatelic treasure he ordered. The contents arrived in good shape – what caught his attention was the detailed and what seems to be rather complicated return address. After looking at that address, a simple Post Office Box or street address will NEVER be taken for granted!