

MRI Donation by Newton Kulp

Are you a collector of individual countries or topical items only or a combination of both? Starting in April the club will provide an unparalleled opportunity for you to fill in some of the blanks in your collection or start a new area of collecting. You will have the chance to look through over 75,000 world-wide mint and used stamps and choose the stamps to fill those holes. In late February Michal Rogers donated three boxes of world-wide stamps to the club. The boxes contained a wide variety of formats from three ring notebooks full of stock pages to inches of loose stamps in the bottom of the boxes. Most of the items were labeled ten cents each and looked to be former dealer stock pages, approval books, remnants from collections, etc. that were not relevant to his auctions. The first job was to un-box the items and organize them into some semblance of order. Once this was accomplished a plan to organize them, group them for selling and determine a way to present them to the club for member's purchase had to be developed.

Once organized and inventoried it was found that the boxes contained world-wide (very few United States) mint and used stamps housed in 6 stock books, 7 three ring notebooks with mostly double sided stock pages, 3 sets of 9 or 10 approval books each, a large number of approval cards, glassines with both individual countries and topicals, legal envelopes containing single country stamps, souvenir sheets, over a pound of stamps on paper and about 4 pounds of loose mint and used stamps. In the boxes also were some dealer stock pages and top loading clear page covers. Some miscellaneous items that did not fit any of the above categories were included.

The 7 three ring notebooks had a wide variety of countries represented in each. The pages were sorted and combined so that all of one country was organized together. Thus, if a collector of Russia needs only look at one three ring notebook for all of the Russian stamps that were formally housed in the seven. It was decided that the stamps in the stock books and approval books would be too time consuming to combine them in the same manner.

To sell the stamps to the club members, the stamps in the stock books, the three sets of approval books and the seven three ring binders initially would be made available at 5 cents each, 6 for 25 cents or 25 for a dollar. The topical and country glassines will be offered at 25 cents each – no matter how many stamps each contained. The loose stamps were placed into individual weighed packages to be sold at \$2.00 each. The remaining individual items were priced at very reasonable prices. Each item was given a lot number for tracking purposes so the club can keep track of the proceeds gained by this very generous donation.

The current plan is to display all of the items on a table at the back of the meeting room starting at the first meeting in April and continue to do so for about three months. After the members have had their chance to purchase individual items, what is left will be grouped and sold at our regular auctions.

[The BoD and Membership of the CFSC would like to thank Mike Rogers, Inc. for this wonderful donation.]



The Gavel -- The Past Meets the Present

We had a real surprise at the last meeting, when an club artifact that had been in our hands for years and used at just about every meeting was discovered to have the name of a long-ago club President engraved on it. W.G. Slocum served as President of the CFSC from 1954-1955. William G. also served as secretary from 1952-1953. This piece of club history had been completely overlooked!

Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



Andy Levitt used to say I had good instincts, but that's not how I became a China dealer. Others' greed transformed me, the proprietor of a local mom-and-pop stamp shop, into an internationally recognized philatelist.

The acquisition that changed my life occurred in 1982. Arthur Bateman passed away unexpectedly at the young age of 54, leaving a bewildered widow. Mrs Bateman had sustained a frontal lobotomy, something you just don't see anymore, but the effects are as numbing as in the movies. Sweet lady, kind and trusting.

Fortunately, Art had arranged for three stamp collecting friends to watch out for his family.

As a traveling salesman for some 30 years, Art had wonderful opportunities to augment his collections. Moreover, he was the sales manager for some specialist societies. The man knew his stuff. Understandably secretive about his holdings as everything was kept at home without an alarm system, this worked against the disposition of the material because his friends were unprepared for the value to be received. It was a recipe for disaster.

Upon Art's passing, Mrs. Bateman threw out his checkbooks, records and inventories. No one told her to do otherwise. There's a lesson for us all here—we need step by step written instructions in the event of our death or incapacity.

The friends came up with a game plan. There was a well-established local dealer invited in to make an offer. And they called in a national level dealer of great reknown. These two would make closed bids for the entire lot which filled a bedroom. The Bateman hoard could be divided into three areas: China/Asia, Scandinavia and everything else.

When the two independent offers came in and both were for \$10,000 each, the friends at first thought it the right value. You have to understand China was simply not popular back then. Some stamps sold for 1% (!) of what it sells for today. But there was so much more material than just China.

One of Art's friends, David Peterson, a Methodist minister, considered the \$10,000

“too round” a number, like a throw-away bid, off the cuff. He spoke to Mrs Bateman and thought the dealers had spent too little time evaluating the material, coming up with the price. None of this was told to me when I was invited in.

So David told me that the estate had received two bids for the collection and asked whether I would evaluate the offers. I halted him before he could tell me the amount and asked if I could do my own appraisal? Only thing I asked was who was I bidding against? Then I knew there was no way I was going to be able to buy the Bateman collection: that famous national level dealer was a star! He had the reputation, money, etc. How was I going to bid against him?

I knew in my heart I wasn't going to be able to buy the collection because I was going against a guy I was in awe of. And I sure didn't have the money to buy the whole lot. It just didn't occur to me that someone of his stature would try to buy this whole room from a lady with a lobotomy on the cheap. So I spent three days in the Bateman home, having great fun. It was a grand opportunity to view Art's China.

I “walked” the room to gain a sense of what was there. What at first glance appeared to be disorganized heaps actually made sense. China/Asia was in 28 cartons in one corner, U.S. was in the closet, Scandinavia off to the left, everything else plumb in the middle. This was a working stamp collection, something that Art attended to right up to when he got sick.

In every direction, there were treasures. U.N. was very popular at the time. I found a pad of 100 of the 1955 souvenir sheet VFNH, buy price \$115 (x100) = \$11,500. I saw a U.S. \$4 Columbian mint block, an African collection that still resonates, great and small collections of the world. Some collections were built to the point of excellence, some were acquisitions waiting to be merged. Cards, covers, boxes. It would take a skilled eye to derive the most money possible out of it.

I concentrated on the China/Asia cartons revealing albums and envelopes. Junk upon treasures. Famous names: Allen Brown,

J.M. Henry, Sir David Roseway, others. I swooned when I opened a plain manila envelope, revealing a set of China's 1878 Large Dragons in complete sheets! A whole carton of classic Macau. Red Revenue covers were selling for \$75 in those days and there were hundreds!

Three days passed, appraisal finished. I requested David Peterson's presence with Mrs Bateman. I had a suggestion. “Let me purchase the China and Asia. I'll accept the balance on a consignment basis.” Since my offer for just the China and Asia was multiples of what had been offered for everything, fair to say they were real happy. Did the paperwork, got a long truck and now I was a China dealer.

I made three rules for myself on the Bateman material. I'd never wholesale any of it. I'd develop a full service business with it. (I had a pocket sized pricelist of the stamps of Finland, pics and prices. I thought: Wow: What a great thing to do!). And I'd give back to the hobby. Write columns, publish, serve.

When the national dealer found out the details on the Bateman material, he called to say that I'd never be a success in the business because I'd left money on the table, that a smarter way to have handled the transaction would have been to ask what the competing offer was. He didn't get it: the rules were closed bids.

I realize I was fortunate to have had this opportunity not only to have a jump start into the China/Asia business with a mammoth inventory but more importantly, it reinforced that integrity was all important - a lesson that has stayed with me ever since.”

Chinese Philately wasn't popular then, but it was so interesting. Don Alexander, Rick Kavin, Richard Sarchet, Don East, Henry Nyi and numerous other collectors bent over backwards helping me in those formative years. It never occurred to me that the business would be successful, yet it satisfied my sense of adventure. ☐