

# CFSC Into Preservation by A. Stephen Patrick

The Orange County Library sponsored a program to honor National Preservation Week and the Central Florida Stamp Club participated. Francis Ferguson and Steve Patrick spent Sunday afternoon, April 23 at the downtown library dispensing information about our club. Next year it was indicated that the topic will be a more general one of hobbies, which should attract more participation.

Several responded to the notice in the paper and came to seek information about disposing of old stamp collections. A few stamps were given away and time was given on stage to talk about stamp collecting and how to preserve stamps. Thanks to Francis and Steve for giving your time as club ambassadors.



## Returned Mail from APEX 1934 by Phil Fettig



APEX was an International Air Post Exhibition held in London from May 7<sup>th</sup> to May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1934. The 1930s were the “Golden Years” of collectors sending off covers to be canceled at events. This widespread practice resulted in an unfathomable number of covers that we enjoy in our collections today. The subjects include First Days, First Flights, Airport Dedications, Naval Ship events, Civic events and yes – Stamp Exhibitions. One extension of this practice involved sending the covers to fictitious names or general delivery to yourself. This resulted in the item being returned, hopefully covered with a lot of neat cancellations. August

Ohtersen of Brooklyn took this practice a step further by sending covers to APEX, in order to get the label and cancellation for the event. His plan involved addressing them to a Miss Leslie Deane at General Delivery in states with towns named Apex. Of course, Miss Deane, whoever she was, never picked them up. This cover was addressed to Apex, MO and has a really nice “Deficiency in Address” circular cancel on the front. The reverse has the APEX sticker as well as a Railway Mail Service cancellation and one from St. Paul, MN. All in all, a well-traveled cover – I sure would have loved to obtain, or even just look at the rest of Mr. Ohtersen's collection. From internet records, it appears he died in 1983 in Southern Florida. Since my 3 covers came out of a box lot in a Michael Rogers, Inc. auction, I wonder how close I might have been to the rest of the collection!





# Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



I'll never forget the phone call. That voice! "Michael?"

She rattled on how her husband Richard and his first wife had baby-sat my sister and me when my mother and father had gone to the opera from our apartment in Manhattan, and now that he was gone she had the house in Manhattan stuffed with stamps, so would I come up and help her? (OK—Problem: my mother and father didn't like each other enough when my sister and I were growing up to go out with each other; they sure weren't sophisticated enough to go to the opera, and we didn't live in Manhattan. My family lived in the borough of Queens. Manhattan was across the East River, a 15¢ subway ride away. So, surely this gal had me confused with someone else?)

The European accented voice was coming at me with the speed of a revved-up motorcycle, even when I was doubtful she had the right guy. When I sat in her living room, I saw Richard's photo on the fireplace mantle, and it all fell into place. I wept with tears of joy.

I'm so grateful that I met the exuberant Anne Marie Mayer that I've always felt towards her as family. Just when I needed a pick-me-up at a busy NYC stamp show, Anne Marie would turn up with a box of mouth watering rugelach, the Jewish pastry of raisins, walnuts and fruit. Kiss, kiss, on both cheeks, of course!

Richard, Anne Marie's husband, and his brother Albert Mayer owned the Diplomat Stamp Shop in Manhattan, on the ground floor of the Diplomat Hotel. Before I went to college in 1967, New York City's philatelic world was energetic with a great many businesses being stamp shops or high above as offices. Gradually, insurance concerns and other corporations which could afford higher rents pushed the mom and pop single owner stamp companies away from the city.

Miserable in bed with measles at age 7, an uncle gave me a stamp collecting kit thinking it a diversion. I took to collecting with a passion. Going door to door, seeking additions to my collection, I filled up

pages of a worldwide collection. When the 7-cent Hawaii airmail came out in the summer of 1959, I walked the mile to the Main St. Flushing Post Office and bought a block, selling the three duplicates to my friends, earning 2 cents over face per stamp. "Wow! Six cents profit." I thought, added to the dime weekly allowance I received from my parents. "What an easy way to earn money!" My first experience as a stamp dealer.

An older gentleman named Jerry Lapin owned the nearest stamp shop in Jamaica, a 35-minute bus ride. I remember Jerry as a friendly, gentle soul. The downside for me was that as an inquisitive youngster without any real money to spend, I received scant attention. Just a schoolboy.

I'd heard from store chatter that, in Manhattan, there were a great many stamp shops. To reach Manhattan meant riding the IRT subway, an adventure in itself. After my 13th birthday, I could disappear on Saturdays to go into the city with my spending money earned selling stamps at school. At first I ventured to fabled Nassau Street to see what that was all about, then at other times, I walked through midtown. It was great fun.

The great 42nd St. and Fifth Avenue library had a collection of U.S. stamps in glass wall panels of amazing grace and power. I saw 1869 inverts and a complete set of Columbians. Heady stuff!

Coming off the IRT subway, I'd see Carl Dinnerstein who had a shop one level below 42nd St. Always a gracious fellow, I still have one of his sales pages as a memento.

Mr. and Mrs. Max Sage owned the Broadway Stamp Shop on West 54th St., formerly of Nassau Street. Max could turn a phrase and make the trivial sound like a treasure.

I'd go into the Dumont Stamp Shop, until the owner banished me. Too many questions, too little money; I was disappointed I wouldn't be able to look anymore. It turned out well, in the end.

My next stop was the Diplomat Stamp Shop, operated by twin brothers, Richard

and Albert Mayer. Tall, identical twins, 6'7", I believe. Inquiring as to why I was dejected, the story came out about Dumont. I got a job offer! Well, sort of: Help with stamps on Saturdays. No pay, not in cash, but you know what? How thrilling that I'd found my mentors. In between sorting, I had the chance to ask anything that came to mind.

I came in most Saturdays until I was age 17, when my father figured out I was "working" without pay. That offended him so I had to quit.

Fast forward some years. I'd become a stamp dealer, manning a booth at a New York ASDA show. Richard Mayer, now gray hair and stooped shoulders, came by. We embraced. I don't believe that he could have been any prouder of me than if I had been a doctor or attorney.

When Anne Marie called in mid 2004, I traveled to NYC. Their Central Park West brownstone had been purchased in 1967. Upon closing the Diplomat Stamp Shop, the inventory was transferred to the mansion and safely stored there for decades. Both brothers had passed away.

Stamps and covers were to be found four stories high, in boxes and cabinets, under floor boards (skinny arms snaking their way!) and in a discontinued boiler. One basement runs under the street. We'd endured the winter's cold and the summer's heat down there but we'd found stamps, covers, Tammany Hall political tracts, costume jewelry, and coins. We'd shipped something like 60 cartons weighing an average of 40 pounds a pop home. Some went to auction, most into inventory. My rule was if I was unfamiliar with the value of an item, I'd place it in my auction to give the family top money, otherwise, I'd purchase it for my stamp shop.

Anne Marie's phone call brought home memories of kind folks who made me the better for it. Glad I could be helpful for her. ☐