

The Literary Digest Polls

by Steve Patrick

A brief history of Sanford, Florida, will reveal the iterations of the postal service history. The landing on the south shore of Lake Monroe was a useful point of debarkation for the steamboats serving the U.S. Army in the Second Seminole War. Camp Monroe was set up December of 1836 by Lt. Alexander C. W. Fanning with about 300 troops. It was renamed Ft. Mellon after fallen soldier Charles Mellon on February 9, 1837 and abandoned in 1842.

A small village occupied the site, so on March 31, 1846, a post office was established at Mellonville and continued until May, 1866. Several postmasters served, including future Orlando businessman John Hughey, Sydney Speer who was a cousin of the Judge James Speer that named Orlando, Isaac Jernigan and William A. Lovell who was an Orlando landowner and an eventual store owner in Apopka.

After the Civil War an attempt was made to find a healthier location away from the insects of Lake Monroe, and Fort Reed was established about one mile south of the lake. A post



office was established on September 12, 1873, and continued until 1903 when it became part of Sanford, Florida. A city park is still located near the site.

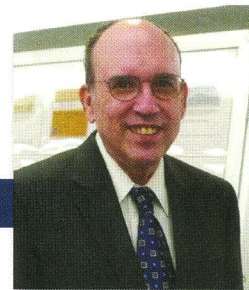
The village of Sanford got its own post office September 9, 1873, and was incorporated in 1877. Henry Sanford dreamed of building an agricultural and industrial center for the town named after him.

Illustrated nearby is a colorful advertising cover mailed from Fort Reed on June 30, 1880. It is an interesting octagon shape (faintly seen starting at the 7 o'clock position and reading up) with a killer of concentric circles. The Mallory Line was the prime mover of people and products between Jacksonville and Sanford, and the stationary represents travelling agent A. H. Crippin. The stamped envelope carries a one cent light blue design of Benjamin Franklin (U 35) and a two cent vermilion Andrew Jackson stamp (#193).

As an uncommon octagon cancel from a small discontinued post office on an illustrated advertising cover with an interesting usage of steamship advertising, the stamp dealer was asking \$65 for this great illustration of Florida postal history.

Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



Some thirty years ago when I became a China specialist dealer, I realized three words I would get tired of hearing were “What’s My Discount?” No matter whether the purchase was to be a few dollars or several thousand, in person at a stamp show or from a mail order pricelist, some people would expect something off my price. How to deflect the question and retain the sale?

I had gone out on a limb purchasing a roomful of China and Asia in 1982 back when China just wasn’t popular. In order to make the buy, I borrowed money from family and the bank. My friends thought I was crazy! As a collector I had an interest in Chinese philately but that in no way prepared me for this undertaking. Suffice to say it was difficult to foresee my business as successful in the 1980’s unless I hustled.

Did I ever! I learned the material, hired staff, issued pricelists, published literature and album pages, and held booths at major stamp shows cross country.

This wasn’t my first rodeo. I was buying and selling stamps in college—becoming a full time dealer after graduation. A three year stint in 1973-6 with John McDaniel of Winter Park introduced me to the efficiency of selling by pricelists, mail order and mail sales plus going to shows. I opened Winter Park Stamp Shop in 1978. Out poured pricelists offering United States and worldwide stamps. The companies I represented were at numerous stamp shows.

I bring up my experiences outside Chinese Philately because then few collectors asked for a discount. Dealers might because of the need to resell for a profit. Neither John McDaniel or Winter Park Stamp Shop was set up for wholesaling quantities to dealers. It wasn’t our thing. Out of common courtesy, if a dealer approached us, we would take a small percentage off our price. John McDaniel did it for Ward Morton; Ward would do it for Tom Moffit, Tom would accommodate Ward, and so on.

Woe be it to the guy to whom we discounted and did not return the favor. In our business, your word is your bond. The stamp industry doesn’t have wholesale houses like the textile and automobile trades do.

We thought discounting to the carriage trade was bad business. When setting policy for my stamp shop in 1978, I followed John McDaniel’s example. The overwhelming majority of our clientele would not ask for a discount. It was unfair to give one person a discount and not extend it to another. It followed in my mind that simply asking ought not earn a discount. It would be disruptive.

John had discounts on anything purchased by mail when buying in larger dollar amounts. Pricelists were never distributed in the store. I remember the consternation of his customers realizing they would have to purchase by mail in order to save money! Surely it cost John sales. My take away was never to put the customer in a position where he was frustrated or annoyed.

Winter Park Stamp Shop opened on a shoestring. My net worth was \$6,000. Friends either traded their services to set up the stamp shop, electing to use their credit later, or collect on the bill down the pike. I sure he had little money for inventory. I was a hard worker & was lucky.

I wrote up big black Elbe stock books envisioning a United States stock down the road. Mint 1932 to date and used 1893 to date. Later on, I added pages for mint 1920-1931, and further on, 1893-1919.

Conventional wisdom of the day (1978) was selling the H.E. Harris catalog in one’s stamp shop and being the hero by offering to sell at a minor discount from Harris. Never mind that Harris was in many cases far over Scott.

I thought about it a whole lot. It seemed to me that my competition wasn’t John McDaniel but rather the national market. Central Florida is a huge tourist mecca. I envisioned a complete stranger being attracted to an clean and bright first

floor window display. I had experience “making the window” as a twelve year old in my grandfather’s dry goods shop years back in Ridgewood, NY. “Grandpa, I learned.”

As I placed stamps in the Elbe’s, I mapped out in my mind the feasibility of doing a Winter Park Stamp Shop U.S. stamp by stamp pricelist. I did my own pricing. I included stamp and coin supplies, catalogs and helpful hints. At times, the U.S. pricelist ran to 40 pages. It was distributed biannually. And it was free!

John had the luxury of his own secretary to prepare pricelists. When I opened Winter Park Stamp Shop, I would type my own pricelists in the evening on an IBM Selectric. He had his own mailing list developed over many years of business while I depended upon renting the American Philatelic Society mailing list.

In one week, two separate, rather nice mint Baltic States collections were offered to each of us for sale. I ended up buying both. Within the week, I broke them down, typed the pricelist, called the APS for the mailing list and had the finished list back from the printer and mailed. Money started to arrive in five days. In three weeks, I had almost everything sold. That’s turn-over! And you know what, no one asked for a discount.

By the summer of 1982, right before the Bateman China accumulation purchase, I owned not only the Winter Park Stamp Shop but Florida Stamp & Coin Company in Orlando. We had the best U.S. stamp stock in central Florida, a national stamp teletype for immediate prices (this before the Internet), an automatic supplement service, a worldwide new issue service, and a complete line of stamp & coin albums and supplies discounted. Not bad considering Winter Park Stamp Shop opened just four years before!

[Editor Note: This fine tale will be continued in our July-August issue.]