The Cover Story So You Want to Be a Stamp Dealer? by Phil Fettig

This is a common thought that most stamp collectors entertain at one point or another in their lives. Ann and I both collected stamps as children long before we were introduced in 1962. We started to date in 1963 and part of the reason our relationship grew was enjoyable visits to a stamp store, along with her father who was also a collector. Now jump ahead about 10 years and you would find us spending time at Island Stamps & Coins in Merritt Island, FL. We would leave our son with her parents who now lived in Eau Gallie, FL as we did. We

became friends with the owners, Jim & Irma Williams and we helped with taking inventory 3-4 times a year. This started a dream of owning our own store. The list of things I didn't know about being a stamp dealer would be pages long. The one important thing I did know was I had a lot to learn.

I could probably write a long article on the many mistakes I made in the first 30 years I called myself a dealer. That might be an article if enough interest is indicated. For this article, I am going to share some of the interesting articles and items I accumulated in my efforts in education.

I bet most of us started collecting with receiving approvals as I did in the 1950s. In the 1970s when looking for a way to be a dealer when my time was limited due to things like family, job, Navy Reserves, etc – approval dealing jumped right to the forefront.

Needless to say, the name "H. E. Harris" immediately came to mind due my youthful experiences. I came across the folder shown in **Figure (A1) on front cover** and thought it was the answer to my needs. **Figure (A2) on front cover** shows the front and back cover of an approval book. The book contained spaces for 100 stamps or 10 sets in a No. 3 Glassine. The booklet covers had space for descriptions and terms.

For the purpose of this article I will assume you already have your stock of approvals set up. So, now you will fill out your

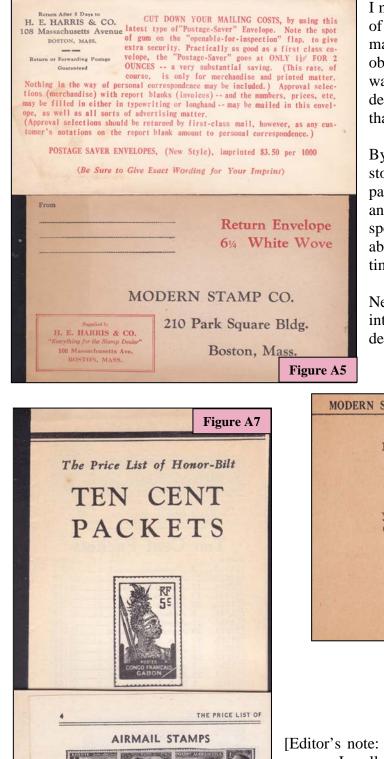
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То		for the Stamp Dealer"	
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Please mak (filled in with you keep.	e complete returns a record of your p	urchases) and payment	er with this report blank in full for the stamps - tes, and Be Sure to
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Approval Report to send out with the stamps as seen in Figure (A3). At the same time, you must fill out your

own record of what you sent out (Figure A4). A card would be kept for each customer. Now you mail out the approvals in an envelope (Figure A5) along with a self-addressed envelope for the client to return items not purchased, and more important – payment! Of course, not everything goes smooth, so Figure (A6) shows the back of a reminder postcard to be sent as a reminder. After a few successful transactions, you may choose to up the ante by offering ready-made packets. Figure (A7) shows the cover for the Ten Cent Packets and a page from the higher priced packet list.

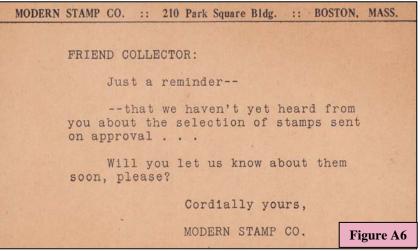
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I never chose to go this route although I did give it a lot of thought. One problem was this packet of dealer material was prepared prior to 1952 and by the time I obtained it in the 1970s the printing cost of the items was much higher and approval sales were on the decline. It still is a neat little package of information that helped fuel my dream, if nothing else.

By the way - I never got to be the owner of a stamp store - just married to one! When Ann bought out her partners in A & R, I was given the position of Janitor and Box Totter. Actually, that was ok with me as I had spent too many years in jobs that required being out and about, going places and not spending large amounts of time in one place.

Next time I will give a review of some of the very interesting publications that were available to both dealers and collectors in the 1930s and beyond.



[Editor's note: While the author and I are in slightly different age groups, I well remember thumbing my way through Linn's in the early 1970s as a young collector and salivating over all the approval offers that could be found in those pages. The names of H.E. Harris and Modern are two I remember easily.]

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Airmail

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