From Association
To Society

The Columbus Collectors' Club
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Society or Association

"'Thi grate trouble with stamp collectors' said Mr. Finerty, "is that they're too well-cinched, not to say self cinched.'
"'What's the answer?' asked Hogan.
"'Nawthin'; I'm only statin' a fact" said Finerty. "Why don't yez join th' A. P. A.?" he asked.
Hogan was speechless with wrath.
"'Phwat! Me! join th'-'"
"'Whist now; be nisy'" said Finerty. "'Th' A. P. A. that I'm talkin' about an' th' A. P. A. that you're thinkin' about is two different institutions.'

Hogan scratched his head and thought awhile. The puzzled look on his face finally giving way to a broad grin. "Faith, Finerty" he said, "I have a few hins, an' was old rooster, but I never tho't of that."

"'Hins! Indade! Hins!" said Finerty, with fine scorn. "'I wor talkin' about stamps an' stamp collectors — th' American Philatelic Association. 'Phil-at-licic,' do yez mind, which manes, lay y'r hands on any stamps yez can find, and whin yez have thim, use y'r intillic' on thim, till yez know th' differ (Continued on page 12)"

APS:
The First Century

by Robert L.D. Davidson

The twentieth century dawned with the APA showing strength and continuity. The next decade was to see it grow slowly, become financially sound, and maintain its reputation for prolonged, contumacious meetings. Proceedings from one such lengthy meeting in 1905 contain twenty-three pages of discussion of a single report from the committee on by-laws. When a vote was finally taken, the report was approved unanimously!

George L. Toppan, serving his second term, led the Association in 1901. His opening address at the annual meeting in Buffalo included the statement that the features of "Her gracious and well-beloved Majesty," Queen Victoria, were reproduced in some form or other upon 944 postage stamps.

Sixty-one members and forty-four others attended the convention, where the problem of proxies absorbed much time and considerable argument, although to little
avail. Perhaps the highlight of the convention was the treasurer’s report, which noted more than $4,000 in “all funds.”

In 1902, Alexander Holland of New York became president of the APA, and the annual meeting was held in Springfield, Massachusetts. During Holland’s second term as president, the Association returned to Clayton, New York, for another well-attended convention.

One of Holland’s addresses included an interesting reference to an exhibition:

President Howes and President Stone [of the local clubs] then received the members, after which tables were placed for the display of stamps, the examination of which, together with social converse among the members and guests, occupied the remainder of the evening.

The following collections were on exhibition: Hawaiian Islands, property of L.L. Green United States, property of C.A. Rothfuchs Japan and China, property of C.A. Howes Philippines, property of J.M. Bartels Exhibit of rarities, property of Dudley Pickman Luxembourg, property of M.H. Lombard Twentieth-century collections, property of E.M. Carpenter and B.L. Drew Stamps on original covers, property of E. deZ. Kelley

This may well have been the spark that led to exhibitions being held regularly in conjunction with the Association’s annual meetings.

APA membership, which now stood at 560, was still fluctuating. However, diminishing numbers did not necessarily have a negative impact on the sales department. In 1903, books valued at $34,465.59 were circulated, and $8,196.10 in sales were recorded.

Hiram E. Deats of Flemington, New Jersey, one of the youngest and surely one of the most loyal of the founding members, was active in the APA when it was first formed. By the time he became president, at Pittsburgh in 1904, he had not missed an annual meeting in nineteen years. He had held numerous official positions, including the tedious job of secretary, and he had initiated many of the ideas that were adopted. The library may have been his greatest interest.

At the time of his death, Deats had been a member for seventy-seven years and held the record for his day. Of course, that record has since been broken.

At the 1905 meeting in Minneapolis, during his final address as president, Deats discussed the release of Canal Zone postage, “which [had] three separate issues before it was a year old.” Then he turned the gavel over to another charter member of the Association, W.C. Stone of Massachusetts.

During Stone’s second term, in 1906, the convention again met in Boston. Since the previous meeting, a “Recruiting Committee” had been formed by the board, and it had gone into action immediately. Its efforts were apparent at the Boston meeting: eighty-nine members, five applicants, and seventy-five guests were present, the best attendance to date.

In fact, the Recruiting Committee had been remarkably active, and even after the usual losses — by death or for non-payment of dues, etc. — were accounted for, more than 150 new members are recorded. P.M. Wolsieffer alone had recruited forty-three new members, and some seventy-four other members each recruited at least one person.

The net worth of the Association, now exceeded $5,000, excluding the sales department, which was showing an income of $5,711.73. Proceedings also show that an earnest attempt was made at this time to persuade the Association to publish a stamp catalogue. Modern officers must be very happy that the suggestion was not adopted.

During this 1906 convention in Boston, the APA teamed up against the Boston Philatelic Society for a baseball game at Franklin Field. As the box score shows, Boston apparently took the “All-Americans” by surprise in the first inning, and went on to win the game by a score of eighteen to thirteen.

Reports from this meeting also mention that “A trip to Wonderland at Revere Beach occupied the evening of Tuesday, with the various diversions of shooting the chutes, trips on the scenic railway, fish dinners, and other amusements.” It is clear that, by 1906, the annual conventions were considered social occasions, as well as occasions for conducting the serious business of the Association. The 1906 convention even had a song, composed by H.N. Mudge, who played his harmonica as accompaniment. The chorus was sung to the tune of “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching”:

Rah! Rah! Rah! for the A.P.A.
It’s the pride of the U.S.;
For it holds in loving thrill
Stamp collectors great and small,
And throughout the world its power is manifest.

The enthusiastic social activities made this one of the most entertaining of the early conventions. On one occasion, H.M. Burt rose and said, “I will read these few lines that were contributed for the occasion by a St. Louis poet:

In the course of the Boston convention.
On the second day of the meeting,
It was the express intention,
so it was said in the greeting,
To take us to Fort Warren
On a steamer from Wharf Hecht,
But the promise turned out barren,
And we got it in the neck.”

1906: Philatelic Nines Play Ball in Boston

On Tuesday afternoon a baseball game between picked nines from the Boston Philatelic Society and the American Philatelic Association was played at Franklin Field, resulting in a victory for Boston, 18 to 13. The full score was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOSTON PHILATELIC SOCIETY</th>
<th>ALL-AMERICA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennett, p.</td>
<td>1 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cob, c.*</td>
<td>2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wylie, 1b.</td>
<td>0 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsburg, 2b.</td>
<td>3 3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis, 3b.</td>
<td>2 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips, ss.</td>
<td>0 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball, lf.</td>
<td>0 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underooey, cf.*</td>
<td>0 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batchelder, rf.</td>
<td>3 3 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11 18 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The score by innings —

| Boston                      | 12 0 3 2 1 18 |
| All-America                 | 0 4 0 3 6 13 |


*Alleged by the scorer to have been in these places but some doubts as to the accuracy of his observation have been raised by reliable witnesses.
the treasury showed a net of $6,389.73, and the sales department was circulating almost $60,000 worth of books. Wolseif- fer, the champion recruiter of the year before, had gathered fifty-nine of the 426 new members.

Luff was serving his second term as president when the APA convened in Columbus in 1908. However, he could not be present, and Henry N. Mudge, the "composer" mentioned above, conducted the meeting in Luff's place. Ohio's governor, Andrew L. Harris, was a member of the APA, and he welcomed the delegation.

At this convention, at the invitation of the president of the Columbus Collectors' Club, a joint session took place that included members of the APA, the Southern Philatelic Association, the Metropolitan Philatelic Society, and the United States Revenue Society. It was a friendly gathering, an occasion for polite speeches, but there is no record of a love feast or of any movement toward joint action.

The Southern Philatelic Association was organized in 1894 to serve collectors in the former Confederate States. An early SPA statement to the effect that the eight-year-old APA was "mostly a bunch of Yankees" proves that Civil War wounds had not yet healed. By the early twentieth century, the SPA was a national organization, and it changed its name to Society of Philatelic Americans in 1922. It was a

George W. Linn, sales superintendent of the Columbus Collectors' Club in 1908, founded Linn's Weekly Stamp News some twenty years later.

In the minutes, the poem is followed by a one-word comment: "(applause)."

And, finally, one serious note at this convention, held just after the San Francisco earthquake:

Mr. Deats: Mr. President, I move the following resolution: "Resolved, that the Secretary be authorized, on application and submission of satisfactory proof, that a stockholder's certificate was destroyed in the San Francisco catastrophe, to issue without cost to this stockholder a duplicate certificate."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rich and on being put to vote was carried.

The next year, in 1907, the annual meeting went west to Denver. The new president was the outgoing and extremely popular John N. Luff of New York.

Luff, a wealthy collector who at one time had the finest U.S. collection then extant, was a careful and thorough student. His classic The Postage Stamps of the United States is still a standard reference work. The Luff Award, established in 1942, was named in his honor.

At the 1907 meeting, a gentleman appeared on the scene who subsequently became familiar to many — Dr. Holland A. Davis. Davis was a physician, a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis who had moved to Denver as a young man. He was an active collector, widely known in the philatelic community. Eventually, he would serve the organization as secretary, from 1917 to 1945.

Even though the Denver location was a long trip in "the cars" for the largely Eastern membership, sixty members and fifty guests were present at the 1907 meeting. For the first time, Deats was among the absentees.

Membership had risen to almost 1,200,

Dr. Holland A. Davis is first mentioned in the APA's convention proceedings in 1907. Later, he would serve as the organization's secretary, from 1917 to 1945.
After the joint session, the APA went on about its business, Mudge reading the absent President Luff’s address. Membership in the Association had reached a new high of 1,514, and Willard O. Wylie of Massachusetts was recognized as the new champion recruiter. He had rounded up 133 new members, to top the Wolsiefer record.

Among other recruiters mentioned in 1908 was Philip H. Ward Jr. of Philadelphia who had recruited four new members. Ward later became one of the most distinguished collectors and dealers of U.S. stamps in the history of the organization.

A disturbing report informed the membership that the APA attorney had attempted to collect $4,878.17 in claims. He had retrieved about half in cash and returned stamps and said of the balance, “Amount absolutely worthless and against parties who could not be found [was] . . . $1292.31.”

An interesting aside was the welcoming of the president of the American Numismatic Association, Farran Zerbe of Pennsylvania, who gave a most interesting “little index of money.” He was well-received.

Among the business conducted in 1908 was approval of a 12½ percent commission for the sales manager. A $300 salary for the secretary was turned down, however, and a motion to publish the “year book” on a quarterly basis was defeated. A significant majority was in favor of more frequent publication, but the motion failed to muster two-thirds of the votes, as required for passage.

Finally, by a vote of 527 to 171 (proxies included), the APA at last became the American Philatelic Society.

Mudge evidently performed his duties as chairman of the 1908 convention well: He was elected president for the next term, until the 1909 meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The Atlantic City convention was a success in many ways, with eighty members and a large group of visitors in attendance. Among those present were some half-dozen of the charter members, as well as a number of individuals who would become better known in the future: Hugh M. Clark, W. W. Jewett, Eugene Klein, J. A. Klemans, Percy Mann, and Vahan Motzian.

Wylie again led the recruiters by adding 154 new members to the rolls. Total membership was now 1,757, and the net worth of the Society in all accounts was almost $10,000.

Signatures on an expert certificate from 1906 show that the opinion was rendered by an illustrious panel of philatelists. (Courtesy of Raymond Weill.)

A thriving organization, and until its unfortunate demise in 1982, many collectors were members of both the APS and the SPA. In fact, at one point, the SPA had more members than the APS did.

The Metropolitan Philatelic Society was also a respectable rival of the APA, at one time claiming as many members as the APA. It was founded in 1902 because of the loss of some stamps through the APA’s sales department. Its Metropolitan Philatelic list was widely read, and many of its members were also members of the APA and the SPA. Before the Metropolitan died in the 1920s, it made some great contributions to philately.

A number of APA members formed the backbone of the United States Revenue Society, founded in 1906. Their new field of interest was given impetus by the famous Revenue Book that had been published by the Boston group.

Next Month: The American Philatelic Society celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary.