The Silver Jubilee group had its photograph taken at the Hotel La Salle, Chicago, in August 1911. The three-day anniversary celebration and the stamp exhibit at the Chicago Art Institute were attended by 123 members and their guests.

**APS: The First Century**

by Robert L.D. Davidson

*Celebrating a Quarter Century*

A new quarterly arrangement for *The American Philatelist* began with the November 1910 issue (Volume XXIV, No. 1), and it seemed to fare better than most previous "official publication" efforts. The Chicago club was instrumental in producing the magazine, and it apparently was the lot of Editor C.A. Howes to serve as business manager and as "pleader" for articles, as well. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

The convention of 1910 was held in Detroit, with 112 members and numerous guests in attendance. While much business of the usual sort was conducted, a particular examination was made of the poor work of the secretary. A complete restructuring of that important office followed.

Among the aids to record keeping adopted by the committee were a uniform-sized application blank, a current and running expense account, a "suspense account" for all monies received other than current accounts, a duplicate form record book, a set of permanent ledgers, and a new receipt form for dues. In addition, the old style membership cards were replaced with a new card that carried the statement, "This card is evidence of membership only when a receipt can be shown for dues paid. . . ."

One wonders what miracle held the Society together before these standards of good business practice were employed.

The sales department reported that $8,727 had been remitted for the year, an indication that there was considerable participation, even at this early time, in selling stamps through the Society. The report also showed that more than $90,000 in total books had been received.

But by far the most important and impressive business was planning for the next convention, the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. The committee in charge reported at length:

The members of the committee have discussed a great many details of the proposed 25th Anniversary Celebration, both by correspondence and by means of personal visits with the President of the Society, and have come to the conclusion that it would not be within their province to suggest such definite details of the federation which might conflict with the plans of the local committee appointed by the Society or Club entertaining the American Philatelic Society in 1911.

Without any desire to anticipate legislation, we call your attention to the fact that the recommendations of this committee, regarding an international competitive exhibition, are based, to some extent, upon the presumption that the 1911 convention will be held in a large, centrally located city.

We recommend that such an exhibition be held under the auspices of the American Philatelic Society, that this exhibition be open to collectors only for competition, dealers to be allowed to display for exhibition only.

We have in Chicago a very fine public Art Institute. Mr. French, the director of this institution, has told us, as has likewise Mr. Hutchinson, the president, that we may count on the use of a gallery during the time of the convention in August, 1911.

This will be furnished free, although it may be necessary for the Society to purchase admission cards for the members and their friends. We believe, however, that we can secure free admission to all members on presentation of a convention badge or some similar token.

The expense of holding such an exhibition is somewhat problematical, depending, of course, to a great extent, upon how many exhibits would be secured and their total value.

The largest items of expense would be insurance and medals. We believe that these will be necessary for insuring to all exhibitors the safety from fire and theft of all stamps sent to the committee, which insurance will be effective from the time the stamps are received from the Express Company until they are again delivered safely to the carriers on their return trip.

The medals we suggest should be three in number for each class:

- First prize — gold medal.
- Second prize — silver medal.
- Third prize — bronze medal.

We believe that $260.00 will be a fair amount to figure as the cost of the medals, including the dies, and with $250.00 more, to be used for rental of a proper safety deposit vault for temporary storage, police protection, postage, stationery, incidentals, etc., we have a total expense of $750.00.

We believe that this money can be easily secured (1) by individual subscriptions of members; (2) by advertisements in the official exhibition program; (3) by an appropriation of the Society.

We suggest that there be no official banquet
or smoker during the period of the convention, but that there be set aside one evening for a formal meeting, with appropriate speeches and papers.

In case the convention is held in Chicago, we recommend that one day during the convention period be set aside for the purpose of celebrating with the Chicago Philatelic Society its 25th Anniversary, this day to be known officially as "Chicago Day."

We suggest that a complete history of the Society be printed and distributed at the time of the convention, as a further fitting celebration of its 25th Anniversary.

We should attempt to make this meeting a grand reunion of our membership, especially all the older members and those that have not been active in the Society in recent years.

The recommendation was accepted and a committee was appointed that included most of the members of the original anniversary celebration committee: Chairman, President H.N. Mudge; Director of Exhibit, H.M. Loth; Assistant Director of Exhibit, C.E. Severn; Section of Medals, J.W. Scott, chairman, Clarence H. Eagle, and John N. Luff; Section of Finance, John E. Rust, chairman, and Charles F. Mann, treasurer; Section of Printed Exhibition Program, Joseph S. Rich, chairman; Section of Anniversary Exercises, F.R. Cornwall, chairman; Section of Society History, George L. Toppan, chairman.

The impetus having been given, the real work of preparing for an imposing and grand demonstration of the might of the APS began. A new handbook was authorized by the committee, and Chicago was definitely set as the convention site. That the Windy City was deemed the proper place to hold the Silver Jubilee celebration is shown by a bit of wit included in the invitations:

Chicago is a place where the wind blows loud;
Where the sun shines bright, — in the sky no cloud;
Where its residents all dwell near unto heaven,
Therefore, me for Chicago in nineteen eleven.

After a whole year of publicity, it is no wonder that 123 members and many guests were assembled in Chicago in August 1911 when Harry Mudge, president of the Society, called the convention to order. A contemporary report included the following account:

The business session of the first evening was followed by an informal banquet at the headquarters, lasting well into the morning of the next day. Sept. 17 the delegates were taken to the Royal Opera to witness the performance of "The Flying Dutchman," and after the opera supper was served in the palm garden of the Grand Hotel Royal.

At six o'clock... all the delegates assembled to a formal banquet in the grand festival hall of the beautiful "Restaurant Hasselbracken. . . ."

The President of the Society had the Postmaster General of Sweden on his right and Mr. Fred J. Melville on his left. . . .

It was again the morning of another day before the banquet came to an end. Greetings were received and read from The Royal Philatelic Society... from Norwegian and German societies and from all the Branches of the Swedish Society as well as from a great number of its members at home and abroad.

Three papers were read during the convention. One, by Doctor Astley Levin, on "Swedish Cancellation," was illustrated by the author's valuable collection. Mr. Fred J. Melville gave a lecture on "The British Post Office" from its origin to the present day. The lecture was illustrated by stereopticon pictures. The third paper, by Mr. Nils Westberg, indicated a great amount of knowledge and study, and treated of "The valuation of postage stamps."

Messages were also read from Prince Gustaf Adolph of Sweden and King Edward VII of Great Britain. It was a memorable occasion, and considerable appreciation was expressed by all in attendance.

Another report concerned itself with souvenirs:

**CONVENTION SOUVENIRS.** The attendants at the Convention... will not only long hold in memory the entertainment offered them and the fine exhibition provided for the Silver Jubilee, but were enabled to carry away tangible mementos of the occasion. The Chicago Philatelic Society, as entertainers, not only provided a splendid program for the event, but outdid themselves in the souvenirs they presented to members who attended.

One of these, the Official Badge was in the form of a medal, the obverse showing a finely executed profile of the retiring President, Henry N. Mudge, whose name appears following the rim.

The reverse has the Society name on a banderole which doubles across the medal, and a palm branch following the rim at the right.

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Planning for the Silver Jubilee took up much of 1910–11 and everyone got into the act. From left are: John N. Luff, who served on the medals committee; F.R. Cornwall, chairman of the anniversary exercises committee; and W.C. Stone, who served on the panel of judges for the philatelic exhibition.
Above is “Henry N. Mudge, President.” and below “Chicago Aug. 22-25, 1911. 25th Year.”

The original, in silver, was presented to President Mudge, and all of the members received a replica.

The medals, whose execution is superb, were designed by Adam Pietz, of Philadelphia. They were suspended from a bar pin, lettered “Silver Jubilee,” by a dark blue ribbon on which was printed in silver “American Philatelic Society — 25th Anniversary — Convention — Chicago — Aug. 22-25, 1911.”

As if this were not enough, a second souvenir in the shape of a stamp especially engraved for the occasion was presented to each member. This was unique, as it had for its center piece the Stuart portrait of Washington which was used on the $5.00 United States Proprietary Revenue Stamp of 1871-75. That this was possible comes from the fact that the engravers, the National Bank Note Co. of Philadelphia, are the successors of Joseph R. Carpenter, who executed the original die during his contract for furnishing the Civil War Revenue.

The frame surrounding the portrait is very tastefully put up, the Society name and “25th Anniversary” appearing above and below the head respectively. The word “Souvenir” is at the top of the stamp and “Chicago, August 1911” appears at the bottom. The stamps were not printed from a plate, but from the steel die, so that none of the clearness of the engraving would be lost in the impression. They are thus in the nature of “Artist’s Proofs,” and are supplied with large margins, though perforated near the stamp design. In the lower margin appears the imprint of the engravers, and in the upper margin “Original Die Impression.” A set in five different colors — orange, Carmine, black, Prussian blue and green — makes a most attractive as well as historically interesting addition to the A.P.S. member’s souvenirs, or den decorations, or album page as he prefers.

The 1911 convention was a double celebration, because the host, the Chicago club, was also observing its twenty-fifth anniversary. Hence, there was much joint entertainment and many speeches.

One of the more interesting speeches included this vignette:

**Mr. Diamant:** I hardly know how to begin, and if you will allow me, I will relate a little anecdote before I begin to talk.

Bill Jones was a lawyer at Washington, a sort of a go-as-you-please lawyer, who made a specialty of divorce cases, breach of promise suits, and so on. He was not very wealthy, was always desirous of securing as many customers as he could — patrons — but he noticed that whenever any men came into the office they were generally bill collectors, or were asking for favors, and so on. Whenever women came in, it meant a fee for him.

So he wanted to get out of his trouble, and he tried several ways. At last he conceived the idea of buying a parrot, to teach that whenever a man came in, it should say, “Bill Jones is out fishing and won’t be back for a week,” and

whenever a lady came in, to say, “just step in here, have a seat; be in a minute.”

Things went along swimmingly. He found there was no trouble until one day Dr. Mary Walker came in. The parrot jumped from his perch, walked around there, looked at her very carefully, hopped over to the door and said, “Bill, come out. I can’t do this subject justice.”

The panel of judges for the philatelic exhibition was a notable one. The chairman was former president John N. Luff, who, along with W.C. Stone, Eugene Klein, D.T. Eaton, and Henry Ades Fowler, completed what must have been a most successful panel of outstanding members.

Among the great collectors who were beginning to acquire significant material was George H. Worthington, a wealthy Cleveland executive. His “secretary,” Alvin Good, who was also a member of the APS, did much of the assembling, mounting, and other work required to create an outstanding philatelic accumulation.

Worthington, through Good, was always willing to help the exhibits. In Chicago, he showed “entire covers” of some of his Confederate States. A list of the material he exhibited shows that, in 1911, he already had a marvelous collection.

The twenty-fifth anniversary convention was financed in part by subscriptions that ranged from $1 to $50. More than $600, not an inconsiderable sum for the time, was raised in this way, and a deficit was promptly paid by Mr. Worthington. Other funds were raised, of course, through the sale of certain souvenirs and catalogues.

Mr. Worthington’s U.S. exhibit won a gold medal in its division, one of twenty-four sub-sections listed in the program, which provides evidence of widespread specialization. The program also indicates that the exhibition included philatelic items from some fifty nations and colonies.

The press — and APS members, as well — reported that organization of the convention was most effective, and that the celebration was a complete success. President Mudge commented:

This Society may pride itself on the fact that it gave in honor of its twenty-fifth birthday the greatest stamp exhibition ever held in this country and came out of it with a clean financial record, as well as more credibility from a Philatelic point of view.

The most interesting items that entered into the total cost of the exhibition and convention were:

- Insurance, including vault timer and guards $576.50
- Cost of Medals 339.87
- Printing 317.69
- All other expenditures 180.95

$1,415.01

The exhibition consisted of several hundred frames, each of which held four sheets of album-size pages. In addition, there were eight standing showcases and six large showcases for dealers’ exhibits.

Much gratitude was extended to the host club for yeoman service in mounting and removing the exhibits, and a number of the members were singled out and praised for giving up their personal business to devote many days to the project. The assistance of the Chicago Art Institute, where the exhibition was held, was also of great value to the APS.

An impressive catalogue of the exhibition is available in the American Philatelic Research Library, and interested readers can see for themselves what was accomplished seventy-five years ago.

It would be an oversight not to mention the names of some of the exhibitors, for they constituted something of an all-star team of American philately. Along with Worthington, there were — to name a few — Ackerman, Bartels, Mann, Phillips, Rumil, Scott, McBride, and Wood. One George W. Rice exhibited “United States adhesive stamps for machine use, with government private perforations.” Apparently, coil stamps were already “in.”

Elected president for 1911-12 was Frederick R. Cornwall of St. Louis. Cornwall was a protege of John Tiffany and had been an active member of the Society for some years. One of the new directors was past-president W.C. Stone, who continued his useful service to the APS.

Stone was commissioned to write the history of the Society’s first quarter-century, and it appeared in two installments in The American Philatelist in 1912. I owe him much.

Thus ended the first twenty-five years of the APS.

Next month: Through the war years to the Chase era.

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