The Depression’s impact was fully felt at the 1931 convention in Memphis. Only ninety members attended. Finances, however, were healthy. The Society’s assets totaled nearly $49,000. Dr. Clarence Hennan of Chicago began his term as president at this gathering, which the AP said would always be known as the “Happy Convention.” Despite Hennan’s popularity and excellent leadership, APS membership would decline during his term.

The 1932 meeting was held in Los Angeles, immediately following the Olympic Games. Only a handful of Easterners made the long journey in this third year of the Depression, Steve Rich and Bill Tassig being the only New Yorkers in attendance.

In October 1932, a serious fire occurred at the plant of the Stowell Co., Federalsburg, Maryland, printers of the AP. However, the firm managed to get the journal out with only a short delay. In 1935, when the plant was flooded by a nearby river, another slight delay occurred.

The AP noted the deaths of more charter members: Joseph L. Rich, George Allen, E.J. Parker, and Ernest Ackerman.

A series of editorials in the AP in 1932 pointed to the danger of mixing philately with politics:

In this era of world-wide business depression and dire distress every voter must give serious thought to the grave problems that beset our Government and intelligently cast his ballot for that party that to him appears to offer the best course toward their solution. But beside all that the collector of stamps, be he Democrat or Republican, must feel a brotherly affection for his fellow hobbyist that aspires so high and thus, regardless of other considerations be influenced in his favor. Governor Roosevelt is a serious student and collector of “Americana” and his stamp collection forms an important section of this broad field. He is interested and enthusiastic over matters relating to U.S. Postal History and his collection, an important one, reflects a careful study of the subject. From the viewpoint of the stamp collector per se, the victory of Governor Roosevelt at the polls this November would be the most desirable event in philatelic history. The resultant gain in prestige with the concomitant publicity that would necessarily follow would surely develop a world-wide boom in
stamps and with the descriptive phrase “The Hobby of Kings” joined by “The President’s Hobby” the progress and spread of Philately in these United States would be of momentous proportions.

And so, not as a Wet or Dry, not as a Democrat or as a Republican, not as a liberal or a conservative, but simply as an enthusiast in Philately, we bespeak the favorable consideration by all the members of the A.P.S. of the candidacy of our fellow member, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, A.P.S. #11590, for the office of President of the United States!

Later we read:

WE WERE WARNED by our friend, George Linn, Publisher and Editor of “Linn’s Weekly Stamp News,” that any editorial support for the candidacy of Member Roosevelt to the Presidency of the United States would get us into serious trouble and his dire prophesies almost caused us to adopt his suggestion of jumping into the lake. Well, we did get some tough letters and some nice ones too. One member said we ought to get the appointment of Postmaster General if our fellow member wins and some intimated we ought to be put in jail! We believe however that most members understood that we intended no political endorsement of Mr. Roosevelt’s candidacy or his policies but were merely reporting a big news item for the hobby in the sympathetic way that is proper in case of the personal aspirations of any member of the Society. We are duly conscious of the fact that it is a breach of propriety for the editor of a stamp journal published by a national Society to take any partisan stand on general controversial matters and we also realize it is rather moronic to select political leaders because of their hobby affiliations. We are however partisan on anything that pertains to philately and we believe that every member of the A.P.S. is proud of the fact that one of his fellow members and hobbiests is a candidate for the Presidency!

This has nothing to do with politics, policies or party platforms — it’s just fraternal and philatelic news!

Then, in the spirit of bipartisanship, the editor included this brief note:

PRESIDENT HOOVER, according to a letter just received from his Secretary, Lawrence Richey, has a “high opinion of Philately” and his sons have been stamp collectors all their lives. We trust Washington A.P.S. members will obtain the membership of one of these boys so that whoever the next President may be the Committee attempting to change the present stamp illustration law may have the prestige support if not the active support of the occupant of the White House. That the interest of the Hoover family in stamps has remained unknown for the last four years again points to the need for a more active co-operation of the membership in the large cities with the Recruiting Committee and the officers of the Society.

Among the other events of 1932 was the beginning of the popular radio show, “The Stamp Club of the Air,” which was to continue for many years.

Attendance improved somewhat at the 1933 convention in Chicago, at which Eugene Klein reported on the great WIPA international exhibition in Vienna held earlier that year, noting that six of the twenty-three members of the jury were APS members. The 1933 meeting was held in Chicago so members could visit the Century of Progress Exhibition.

A proposal for “sectional conventions” did not receive support. However, a new membership category — “Member Emeritus” — was established, which granted privileges to those whose term of membership was thirty-five years or more, while eliminating the requirement that they pay dues.

During the 1932–36 period, additional soon-to-be-well-known names appeared in the AP for the first time. Among these were Everett Erle, George T. Turner, Tracy Simpson, Laurence Shoemaker, Saul Newberry, Rollin Flower, Ed. Conner, Earl Apfelbaum, Franklin Bruns, Henry Hill, Burleigh Jacobs, Fritz Billig, Herman Herst, Dan Vooyts, Ellery Deni.
son, David Lidman, and film star Adolph Menjou.

An interesting note appeared in the *AP* at this time:

**LEVELBELYEYUGYUJK** Elzo Hazai Egyesulete is the formidable title of the oldest Hungarian Philatelic Society, which, founded in 1884, is two years older than the American Philatelic Society. These two old organizations have recently made each other corresponding members by formal resolutions and it is hoped that these mutual elections will assist in strengthening the bonds of friendship that have always existed between the respective countries. The Budapest Association publishes some excellent handbooks which being in Magyar the Editor unfortunately cannot read. We should like one of our fellow members, familiar with the tongue, to read and digest these for us. Will some of our Hungarian-Americans please volunteer?

Roscoe B. Martin of New York was elected president for the 1934–35 term, and he opened the Atlantic City Convention with 150 members present, a very substantial attendance in the depth of the Depression. The membership had fallen below 4,000 for the first time in a dozen years. And no new life members were reported.

The first order of business was the tightening up of the by-laws, as ordered by the previous convention. The new format was lengthy, but it was plainly a great improvement and much easier to understand. However, the revisions did not deal with the proxy voting problem. The meeting deferred action on the by-laws revision until the next convention, the Society's fiftieth, in Washington, D.C., in 1935.

While 1935 was indeed the year of the Society's fiftieth annual convention, it was not the Golden Anniversary; that was in 1936. The discrepancy arose because the organizational meeting in 1886 was counted as the first meeting. (No meeting was held in 1943, because of wartime exigencies, so the convention number and the anniversary year now coincide. This month's gathering in Washington, D.C., will be the Society's 100th meeting, in its 100th anniversary year.)

Thus, there were two consecutive years of celebration. The first of these was the fiftieth convention in Washington, D.C., August 12–16, 1935. President Roscoe Maslin of New York, who had been elected at the Atlantic City meeting, presided, with 215 members in attendance. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent greetings to his fellow members, a practice that became something of a convention tradition during his terms of office. During the convention, New York dealer Max Ohl...
man, who had persuaded Roosevelt to join the Society, was invited to visit him at the White House.

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, also an APS member, addressed the first business session. Carter Glass Jr., son of the Virginia senator who was father of the Federal Reserve Act of 1914, was toastmaster for the annual banquet.

Some powerful names showed material in the exhibition: F.D.R., Ickes, Thomas Armstrong, Justin Bacharach, Jere Hess Barr, Clarence Brazier, Hugh Clark, Vincent Domrancki, Clarence Hennan, Max Johl, Eugene Klein, Svend Yort, James Waldo Fawcett, Vahan Mozian, George Sloane, Brinkley Turner, Philip Ward, and L.B. Gatchell, to name a few. The President's entry was as follows:

1. A sheet of 100 Confederate 20¢ postage stamps said to be the last ever offered for sale at a Postal headquarters in the Confederate States.
2. A collection of the stamps of Costa Rica, presented to me by His Excellency, Senator Ricardo Jimenez, the President of Costa Rica.
3. A series of recent stamps of the Netherlands, presented to me by the school children of Holland.
4. An album of modern German Stamps in sheets — prior to the return of the gold mark.

Prices for a double room and bath at the Carlton, APS headquarters hotel in 1935, ranged from $6 to $10.

5. A set of stamps of China current in 1934, presented to me by the Delegation of China.
6. An album of the stamps of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, presented to me by the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Litvinoff.
7. Sixteen sheets taken somewhat at random from my collection:
   (a) Six sheets Roman States
   (b) Six sheets Haiti
   (c) Four sheets Hongkong.

The long-suffering expert and international secretary, Eugene Klein of Philadelphia, was elected president for the next two years, along with a Washington slate of vice presidents that included Catherine Manning, head of the philatelic collection of the Smithsonian. Apparently, the political hard feelings of a few years earlier had ended, and Clarence Hennan and A.H. Wilhelm, both past presidents, were elected directors-at-large. Adolph Steg of Buffalo began one of his long terms of service, this time as international secretary.

P.M. Wolfsieffer, past president and charter member, died just before the 1935 convention, and his forty-nine years of service were eulogized by the whole group. He had been another of the old guard, who had given so much to the Society. Another charter member, W.A. McCalla, also died in this year.

The committee appointed to celebrate the Golden Jubilee Year reported at length on its plans for the Omaha meeting in 1936. Its major recommendations were to restate the services the APS offered for its members, and to reach as wide an audience as possible.

President-elect Klein was an eminent dealer and collector. He had been educated abroad and was fluent in six languages. In addition to his long service to the APS, he had written several philatelic monographs, including his classic Waterway Packet Mails of the U.S., 1818–1899. With several supplements, it remains authoritative. He had served as international secretary of the APS, he was a respected judge of classic stamps, and he was founder and first president of the American Philatelic Congress, an office he held from 1935 until he died in 1943.

The Congress, always closely tied to the APS by cross membership, was a scholarly endeavor to foster philatelic research and writing. Its Book has been published annually for fifty years. APS leaders such as Bruns, Barr, Hennan, Turner, Lidman, Davidson, Sellers, Yort, Stump, and Brandeberry have been among the succeeding presidents. And many others have edited or written for the Book.

In this year, the AP began to publish Stanley Ashbrook’s great treatises on the 1-cent and 10-cent stamps of the U.S. issues of 1851–59. These appeared over a number of years. The journal also noted that former President Herbert Hoover had joined the Society, as member No. 13326. And the AP carried this item:

**TIPEX, New York, May 9–17, 1936**

As behooves a society of importance our directors engaged a lounge at the big New York show where members will be greeted by officers who will be happy to make the personal acquaintance of all who attend. Our Committee of Honor consists of the following former Presidents:

- Hiram E. Deats: 1904–1905
- William C. Stone: 1905–1907
- John N. Luff: 1907–1909
The Golden Jubilee Year convention met in Omaha in September 1936, with 152 members registered and "... about 100 to 150 members and guests present who did not register." Many were from the Midwest, of course, but a dozen or more journeyed from the East Coast, and five Californians were on hand. The total assets of the APS had grown to more than $60,000 in the Permanent Fund, Life Membership Fund, and the Insurance Fund. This had to be a remarkable achievement in the Depression economy. Former President Wilhelm was voted appreciation for his "watch-dog" role with the Society's funds. Wilhelm cheered the meeting by reporting, "I am pleased to state that the Society is running on a smooth and even keel." No fewer than seventy chapters filed annual reports to this meeting.

The Obituary Committee reported the deaths of two more charter members, the Society's first treasurer, H.L. Calman, and W.W. MacClaren. The original band, after fifty years, had very few survivors, among them the ubiquitous Uncle Billy Stone and Hiram Deals, the bibliophile.

Speakers at Omaha included:
- Clinton B. Eilenderger, third assistant postmaster general.
- R.E. Fellers, superintendent of the division of stamps of the Post Office Department.
- Delf Norona, Moundsville, West Virginia, "U.S. Postal Markings."
- Justin L. Bacharach, Sunnyside, Long Island, "U.S. Revenue Stamps."
- Walter J. Conrath, Albion, Pennsylvania, "Airmails."
- K.N. Woodward, Jackson Heights, New York, "Latin America."
- J.E. Guest, Dallas, Texas, "Sales Department."

The convention chose Detroit for the 1937 meeting. In August of that year, 178 members, including three charter members, met in the Motor City. Ralph Kimble had taken over as editor of the AP upon the resignation of "Dolph" Fennel, who had served so loyally for fifteen years. Fennel, who died in 1942 at age sixty-one, had made the AP into the leading publication it was to remain.

Officers elected for the next biennium included some new names, as the APS entered its second half-century. Carter Glass Jr. was elected president over Fred M. Green, 893-870, in that APS rarity — a hotly contested election. Director and past president A.H. Wilhelm offered a disturbing report. Between 1927 and 1937, 5,244 new members had been approved, yet only 700 of that number were still on the rolls. (Today, retention is more than ninety percent.) This lack of retention was a matter of great concern to the assembled members. Uncle Billy Stone noted that only five charter members still were living.

President Glass opened the 1938 New Orleans meeting with 168 members and a similar number of guests present. With the Depression easing, some came from distant places to attend. President Roosevelt sent his usual greetings, and Postmaster General James A. Farley extended his best wishes. At last the membership had exceeded 5,000, despite the dropping of 730 members for non-payment of dues.

Sales Manager Guest announced with some pride that, during his term in office, $830,310.20 had been realized in his department. And the AP was solvent and going well under Col. Kimble. Henry A. Meyer appears as "Examiner #9" of the sales book sleuths.

Greetings from the President of the United States became something of an APS convention tradition during FDR's years in office.
Despite an invitation from, among other places, Havana, Cuba, the convention voted to meet in San Francisco in 1939.

A shocking report appeared in the AP in this year:

From the Vice Presidents

For a number of years prior to his decease, Henry C. Needham was a Specialist Expert of the American Philatelic Society. Mr. Needham's activities concerned mainly the examination of United States Locals. As a result of research and investigation, it has been determined that, in many instances, Mr. Needham was mistaken in his conclusions regarding these stamps.

Members who submitted stamps to Mr. Needham to be expertized might find it advisable to submit the stamps to the present U.S. Local Expert for reexamination at this time.

President Glass did not attend the West Coast meeting, so Vice President Rollin E. Flower presided when the convention opened in San Francisco on September 26, 1939, with 135 members in attendance. Most were from nearby areas, but ten made the long trip from the East Coast.

The opening prayer of the Reverend O.S. Roberts reflected the troubled times:

"Finally, we beseech Thee O Lord to grant that our fellow philatelists in other parts of the world who are at this moment living in the dark night of strife may soon see the glorious dawn of peace."

Glass' annual report urged implementation of the 1938 recommendation to appoint a committee to study a plan to recognize outstanding philatelic service. His remarks on Uncle Billy Stone, who had died in February, were appropriate and moving.

Another philatelic giant, John N. Luff, certainly one of the great American philatelists, had also died during the previous year. He was an officer of Scott Stamp & Coin Co. and had much to do with the standard catalogue. He had an outstanding (a contemporary called it "marvelous") collection of U.S. stamps, and his great work, The Postage Stamps of the U.S., is still widely quoted and authoritative. Along with his presidency of the APS, he also had headed many other important philatelic groups, including the Collectors Club of New York. He was a "world class" judge. His loss and that of Stone reduced the number of surviving charter members to a scant two or three.

By resolution, the 1939 convention set up the John N. Luff Awards, which continue to honor up to three persons each year in one of three categories: distinguished philatelic research, service to philately, and service to the American Philatelic Society. (This year's awards are announced on Page 772.)

Much discussion at this convention was directed toward reforming the system of elections - removing the "proxy plague" - as well as to the problem of "enlisting" more junior collectors. Vice President Flower referred both of these matters to committee.

Nevertheless, the situation in Europe was the main theme of conversation. While the strife seemed far removed from San Francisco, the APS was sensitive to the possibility that it would spread. Members expressed regret and sadness at losses sustained by European collectors and dealers, many of whom had become almost penniless refugees.

The convention voted to collect and properly arrange the files of the Society, which were widely scattered, especially those involving the activities of the Board of Vice Presidents. E.L. Tredick of San Francisco volunteered to undertake this task, if the materials were delivered to him. He was appointed archivist.

It was further announced at the convention that the 1938 Earl of Crawford Award (British) went to the Essay Proof Society, a unit of the APS. Previous APS winners had been E.L. Park (1922), Dr. Carroll Close (1930), and Stanley Ashbrook (1937). These were high honors for scholarship.

The 1940 convention in Buffalo featured an assembly of American philatelists seldom equaled. Among the 186 members in attendance were Ashbrook, Barr, Brazer, Brookman, Bruns, Deats, Dietz, Fawcett, Sol Glass, Herst, Hennan, Burleigh Jacobs, Kehr, Kimble, Kleemann, Klein, Lindquist, Lybarger, Manning, Musser, Norona, Noske, Perry, Larry Shoemaker, Steeg, Wilhelm, and President Flower. Former presidents, future presidents,
names that are "household" for American collectors gathered to further the interests of the APS. The opening prayer was a thanksgiving for peace.

Charter member Hiram Deats was honored by being asked to chair the second session. Frank N. Burt of Boston was honored for twenty-one years of service as official stenographer.

The Society remained financially strong, with $67,000 in assets, despite another decline in membership. Another charter member, Samuel Leland, had died. Tedrich was busy with the files that he had received, but there still were questions about where some materials were stored. Junior memberships for applicants younger than fifteen years of age were approved, starting a new trend in the encouragement of youth. A committee reported that the possibility of a permanent Society headquarters was being studied seriously.

Despite the war clouds, collectors already were preparing for the centenary of the first U.S. postage stamp, in 1947. A committee chaired by Franklin Bruns and including Eugene Klein, Charles Brisley, H.M. Southgate, and Raymond H. Weill had been studying the matter. It was agreed that an appropriate forum for the celebration would be an international exhibition, most probably to be held in New York City.

In Buffalo, the first Luff Awards were presented to Ashbrook and Dietz.

Rollin E. Flower was re-elected to a second two-year term as president, the first time that had happened since Col. Frank Olney had held the office (1896-99).

Like nearly everyone else in the world at the time, stamp collectors endured the challenges of war. The issues of the day were reflected in the AP.

Lastly, may I suggest that which has already been mentioned in other quarters, that you collectors refuse to buy or handle stamps issued by our enemies, Germany, Japan, and Italy, and stamps of any of their stooges and slaves? By this I mean stamps issued by them during the past few years, stamps that can in any possible way bring revenue into the hands of those despicable nations allied against us. Likewise, you dealers will naturally refuse to deal in such stamps, for by so doing you are giving very material aid and comfort to the enemy, and are thereby placing yourselves in the unenviable category of traitors to the United States. Let the wallpaper go — it just brings cash into enemy hands, most of it is junk, and after the war, if any of those stamps are of interest, we can get them then at lower prices and without aiding the enemy.

A Question of Policy

An interesting problem connected with the relation of stamp collecting to national events finds its focus in a letter received from one of our American Philatelist.

Society President Carter Glass Jr. (1937-39) was elected after a hasty contested race, an APS rarity.

our Chapters quite recently. This Chapter, one of the strongest and most progressive, had already published its printed program for the 1942 season and one of the meetings scheduled a talk on stamps of the old German States, together with a display of that material. This program was, obviously, prepared before the outbreak of open hostilities between this country and Hitler land. The question then rose as to whether the program should be recalled and this particular meeting changed in character. While the subject is open to debate, with probable opinions on both sides, I see no reason for a change in the program. In the first place, philately is, or should be, at least academically interested in knowledge concerning the postal emissions and history of all countries, regardless of political events. In the second place, the German States stamps appeared many, many years ago, and a lecture on them need not in any way condone present German actions. I am 100% for eschewing the purchase or sale of ANY stamps that could by any remote possibility result in funds for the Nazi-Fascist powers, but I can see nothing but stupid prejudice in refusing to listen to information concerning them, or to deny the recording of such information for posterity. It is only by publicizing the facts concerning the issuance of enemy stamps that we may know WHAT STAMPS NOT TO BUY!

* * *

From World Stamp Digest, London, June 1940:

Holding The Fort

Developments in the war situation since we wrote our last editorial have been swift, dramatic and far reaching. With the over-running of Holland, Belgium and a part of northern France, and the movement of the tide of battle westwards to the very waters of the English Channel, the threat to this country is as dire as any in its long history. At such a time, our thoughts naturally tend to fly from all other considerations to the paramount one of national defence — which, in the present instance, is the defense of Western civilization also.

For the conduct of that defence the country has made its preparations, including the impressment of all persons and of all property. More and more of us are slipping into the fighting line, or into one or other of those other essential lines that feed the fighting line. As long as we may, those of us who are left must try to maintain the continuity of those things that belong to the civilization for which we are fighting.

* * *

PERSONALS

U. S. Circuit Judge Albert B. Maris, Philadelphia, APS No. 9088, has just received a high national honor in being appointed by Chief Justice Harlan Stone, of the U. S. Supreme Court, to the position on the new three-man Emergency Court of Appeals which will handle cases arising under the operation of the Emergency Price Control Act. Judge Maris, it will be remembered, handed down a decision highly important to philately some years ago, in interpreting the so-called illustration law of that time. The decision was a masterpiece, and resulted in alleviating a most irritating condition among dealers and collectors importing catalogs from abroad.

Next Month: The war years.

The Golden Gate Bridge was featured on the convention label for 1939.