

Reminiscing

By Richard Pederson

I am not one who believes that we would be better off if we could return to the way things were in the 1950s. Personally, I would hate to do without many of today's conveniences, such as color television, VCRs, microwave ovens, air conditioning, and personal computers. Those items, which are now taken for granted by almost everyone, were either non-existent or only appeared in very few homes or businesses when I was young.

Despite the fact that I have no desire to return to those "good old days," I still enjoy reminiscing about the past. After all, it seems that we all tend to remember the good things that happened and tuck the not so good things away in the deepest recesses of our minds. Although far from perfect, the 1950s were a time when many good things happened, both in my personal life and in the country as a whole. The 1950s gave us rock and roll and a generation of music stars that most of us baby boomers will never forget. There are still legions of avid Elvis Presley fans and Chuck Berry is still rocking away after almost half a century. Now, each year, my wife and I join over two thousand fans to make the pilgrimage to the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, Iowa. At the Surf, the last place Buddy Holly played before dying in a plane crash, we are able to celebrate rock and roll while paying tribute to the music of Buddy Holly. Figure 1, Buddy Holly Record, shows a copy of the record "Not Fade Away" recorded by Buddy Holly and the Crickets.



Figure 1. Buddy Holly Record

In addition to providing my musical roots, the 1950s were also a time when my collecting roots took hold. In particular, 1954, the year I turned eight, was a magical time for me. Within the course of a single year, I started collecting baseball cards, coins, and stamps. Several years later, I became interested in rock and roll and started collecting recordings of my favorite artists, with my first

album purchases being offerings from Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers. Appropriately enough, one of Buddy Holly's many tunes was a song entitled "Reminiscing". Figure 2, 1950's Collecting Memorabilia, shows examples of some of the things I collected as a youth.



Figure 2. 1950's Collecting Memorabilia

Although, over time, my collecting enthusiasm has varied and areas of emphasis have changed, I still remain a collector. Baseball cards, my early passion, lost their appeal when I entered high school, and I eventually disposed of my collection. In recent years, I began collecting baseball cards again. I now limit my interest to cards containing members of the original and expansion Washington Senators, whose departures to Minnesota and Texas, respectively, I still mourn. My other collecting interests have remained relatively constant. I even managed to spend some time working with my collections during both my college years and the years when my children were young. As evidenced by my annual treks to Clear Lake, Iowa, I am still a rock and roll buff. Although I scaled my coin collecting interests back when I sold many items during the silver boom of the 1980s, I still actively collect coins.

After all these years, stamp collecting still remains a special passion. Whereas I have either scaled back or maintained a constant level of interest in my other collecting areas, my interest in stamp collecting continues to broaden. I have developed a number of specialty collections. I subscribe to many different philatelic publications. I acquire many postal history items, continually expand my philatelic library, am a member of the American Philatelic Society, and often attend stamp shows and bourses.

One of the things that attracted me to stamp collecting as a child was the thrill of learning from the many little pieces of paper that I acquired. Today that thrill of learning is still with me. Every philatelic publication that I read has stories connecting stamps to history, geography, science, the arts, famous people, and more. There is no other hobby with such a wealth of literature. That vast collection of philatelic books, periodicals, journals, and references provides the opportunity to research my collecting interests and learn new things. Although

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the many philatelic articles I read provide much useful information, their most important quality is that they allow me to reminisce about the days when my collecting interests began.