

## Visiting Youena's

By Richard Pederson

My Great Uncle Walter started me on the great adventure of stamp collecting during the summer of 1954. He gave me some of his used duplicates in an old stock book and I have been hooked ever since. One of my Uncle Walter's friends was a lady named Youena. Although I believe Youena was of Japanese descent, I am not sure whether Youena was her first or last name, or even if I have the spelling correct. What I do know is that Youena was a person that my uncle trusted and respected very much.

Outside of hearing her name spoken, I never knew exactly who Youena was until after my Uncle's death when I was in seventh grade. Starting in the summer of 1959, I spent a portion of every summer with my Great Aunt Esther. While I was there, I did household chores and yard work for my Aunt. One of my rewards that first summer was to take a trip to downtown Washington, DC to see a movie. I can still remember that the movie I saw that day was Hatari starring John Wayne.

After the movie, to my surprise, my Aunt said that we were going to go visit Youena. My interest was certainly aroused because I had always wondered who Youena was and I was about to find out. It turns out, Youena owned a small stamp shop located in the back of a retail store near the Warner theater where I had gone to see the movie. After introducing me to Youena, my Aunt let me look through the many treasures in the stamp shop and pick an item for my collection.

I believe that I chose one of the special printings known as Farley's Follies (see pictured Farley cross gutter block). From that day until after I graduated from high school, I made periodic trips to Youena's stamp shop to purchase items for my collection. As my collection and stamp budget grew larger, I made the rounds of other stamp stores such as Jack O. King on I street or the stamp counters at the Woodward and Lothrop (or just Woodies to us local Washingtonians) and Hecht's department stores. Despite those side trips, I still made regular visits to Youena's. After all, if my Uncle Walter thought she was a good person to deal with, I knew I couldn't go wrong spending my stamp money at her shop.



After graduating from high school, I went off to South Carolina to attend college at Clemson University and, although I continued collecting stamps, there was no longer time for my trips downtown. After graduating from Clemson and starting a family, I got a job with the Navy Department in downtown Washington. Awhile later, I decided that I would take a walk downtown and go visit Youena's stamp shop. To my dismay, not only was her store gone, but the entire block had been

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razed and replaced with office buildings. I have no idea what happened to Youena and her small stamp shop. She may have retired or relocated to another area but, while she was there, I am sure she brought happiness to many young collectors such as me that visited her store. To this day, I still have fond memories of my visits to Youena's stamp shop.