

Pederson Postscripts

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Pederson Patter by Richard Pederson



This is the second edition of the Pederson Stamps newsletter, Pederson Postscripts. It has taken longer than we had hoped to get this edition out, but we had an objective of getting our stamp store up on the internet prior to our second edition. The objective has now been accomplished and you can purchase items from Pederson Stamps by either: 1) going to our website at www.pedersonstamps.com, selecting "Stamps" from the menu on the left, and then clicking the link for "bidstart.com"; or 2) going directly to bidStart and entering "PedersonStamps" (no spaces) as the dealer ID in the search box. We currently have a sampling of stamp offerings and those offerings will increase significantly in coming months. We will also be adding postal history and some non-philatelic items (e.g., coins, sports cards, comic

books). Currently, we take payment in the form of check, money order, or Google Checkout. Our standard shipping and payment terms are published on our website under "Sales Terms and Conditions". Any deviations from the standard terms, for an item listed in our stamp store, are noted with the listing for that item.

In this issue, we are continuing with our series of articles on the Presidential issue of 1938, the "Prexies". This issue's article is on the one-half cent value depicting Benjamin Franklin, our first Postmaster General. There is also an article about the new Pederson Stamps on-line store on the bidStart collectibles site. Our Events column further details our experiences at the APS StampShow and this issue's Stamp Collecting Tips deals with the placement of philatelic items in your chosen storage and display medium (e.g., album, stock book).

For my editorial comment, I will be discussing the collecting of the modern postal emissions that cannot be soaked off envelopes or packages because they are self-adhesive stamps without a water-soluble layer separating the stamp from the adhesive used to attach it to the envelope or package. Many collectors are upset because the United States Postal Service (USPS) has removed the requirement to have a water-soluble layer. At first, I will admit that I was one of those upset by this decision since I am a long-time soaker of stamps for my collection and, more recently, our business. Upon further reflection, I have become much more accepting of this decision. First, a guiding principle of mine is to never get unduly upset about something over which I have little or no control. This happens to be one of those things in which I have no direct say. The USPS is not going to ask my opinion or, in all likelihood, even take my opinion into consideration. It is a business decision that considers many factors, some of which may be unknown to me or other stamp collectors and dealers. I personally believe they could accommodate their business goals and keep most collectors happy by either putting water activated gum or a water-soluble layer on all commemorative stamps and only release non-commemoratives (e.g., definitives, love stamps, holiday stamps) as self-adhesive stamps without a water-soluble layer. That way, the preponderance of stamps produced would be in a form that the USPS has determined is their preferred form and the relatively small amount of soakable stamps produced would be exactly the ones many collectors care the most about, the commemoratives. Thus, if the USPS chose the option of water activated gum, the stamps would even be less expensive to produce and, coupled with the high retention rate for commemoratives, would maximize USPS profits on stamp sales, which would be to everyone's advantage. Enough of getting on my soap box since the USPS decision has been made and is unlikely to be reversed no matter how much sense it would seem to make to us in the philatelic community. The printing contractors who have little or no interest in stamp collecting are likely to make most of the decisions affecting the production of stamps and they have no compelling reason to do anything except print the stamps as inexpensively as possible, which means without the water-soluble layer (assuming they are directed to print self-adhesives).

If we accept the fact that stamps are not going to be soakable in the future, then what do we, as collectors, do to accommodate that decision. There are only three choices: 1) stop collecting stamps because things did not go your way; 2) only collect stamps up to a specified date or only collect stamps from countries that have soakable stamps so as to exclude all or most modern non-soakable stamps; and 3) change the way you collect stamps by leaving them attached to the backing paper as entires (i.e., a complete envelope with the stamp still attached) or neatly trimmed singles. As far as I am concerned, there is only one bad choice and that is to give up collecting just because stamps are no longer produced in the manner you like. This is the philatelic equivalent of taking your basketball and going home unless you are the only one on the team that gets to shoot. If you can give up collecting that easily, I would question just how committed (some spouses would probably say addicted) to stamp collecting you really were. If you really want to continue collecting modern stamps in a traditional manner (i.e., one of each mounted in an album or stock book), why not just neatly clip the stamp from the paper it is attached to and

place it in your album or stock book as you always have. You will have a little more thickness because of the backing paper, but if the stamps are neatly clipped, they will still have an attractive and uniform appearance. You can also collect your stamps on cover which creates an even greater collecting challenge and eliminates the issue. For those who want to continue soaking, it will be many years before the supply of on paper stamps completely dries up. You may have to collect different countries or confine yourself to earlier issues, but there is still plenty to collect so go collect and be happy. Isn't that what our hobby is all about anyway?



Introducing the Pederson Stamps On-Line Store

Pederson Stamps has celebrated its first anniversary by bringing up its on-line store. The on-line store is hosted on the popular web site bidstart.com, a rapidly growing web site containing hundreds of on-line stamp stores and many thousands of philatelic items and other collectibles. We chose this site because it contains excellent search tools, provides for easy integration of Google Checkout to facilitate payment of your purchases, allows us to sell our offerings as store items or via auction, and provides our customers an array of tools that allow capabilities such as creating want lists and permitting the watching of selected items offered for sale. Customers also can either easily link from our store to information (e.g., sale and shipping terms) stored on the Pederson Stamps web site or navigate to our bidStart store from the Pederson Stamps web site. In addition, our on-line store also provides the capability for customers to make a best offer for selected items. For instance, if a given item in the store that is on sale for \$30 says "Make A Best Offer", and your budget for that item is \$25, you can make us an offer of \$25 since we may accept the offer. Our one caveat is that when you make an offer, please make sure it is your best one since we will not go back and forth on offers. We will either accept your offer or decline it. Try our store out and if you have any suggestions, please drop us an email at rich@pedersonstamps.com.

The Prexies by Richard Pederson

This is the second in our series of articles about the Presidential series of 1938, which is popularly called the "Prexies" by many stamp collectors. Since the series is being presented in order starting with the lowest value and continuing through the highest value, this article will discuss the ½¢ value honoring Benjamin Franklin. Figure 1, below, shows an enlarged picture of the ½¢ Presidential series value depicting Franklin.



Figure 1.   Benjamin Franklin

Franklin was certainly one of the most accomplished and prominent figures of 18th century America making significant contributions in many areas including science, politics, foreign affairs, literature, publishing, and postal communications. Franklin, who was the 15th child and youngest son in a family of 17 children, was born in Boston in 1706. Franklin's many accomplishments were achieved despite having only 2 years of formal education as a child. He started his printing and publishing career, at the age of 12, as an apprentice in an older brother's print shop. At the age of 17, Franklin ran away to Philadelphia where he worked in several print shops and, later, as an assistant in the shop of a merchant, Thomas Denham. During this period, Franklin also spent time in London, England working as a typesetter in a print shop. In 1730, after the death of Thomas Denham, he resumed his printing career opening his own printing business in Philadelphia. and became publisher of the newspaper the Pennsylvania Gazette.

In 1737, Franklin agreed to become Postmaster of Philadelphia and in 1753 was appointed Deputy Postmaster General of all the American colonies and at the start of the Revolutionary War he was appointed Postmaster General of the Continental Congress. In 1733, Franklin began publishing Poor Richard's Almanack, the work on which a great deal of his popularity was built.

As a scientist, Franklin is probably best known for his experiment with electricity where he flew a kite on metal wire during a thunderstorm. One of his inventions, the lightning rod, followed from that experiment. Other inventions included the Franklin stove, bifocal glasses, and the glass armonica. Franklin, worked with a whaler captain, Timothy Folger, to chart and name the Gulf Stream and note its impact on the speed of ships crossing the Atlantic.

Franklin's political career spanned a period of over 40 years, starting as a councilman in Philadelphia and ending with his serving as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

Events

Unfortunately, due to schedule conflicts, we missed this year's NAPEX show, a local APS World Series of Philately show that is one of our favorite events. We were able to attend the APS StampShow 2009 held August 6th through 9th in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The first day there provided a little time for sightseeing and to try out a local restaurant, Primanti Bros., that we

were told was representative of Pittsburgh. Figure 1 shows the front of the Primanti Bros. restaurant.



Figure 1. Primanti Bros. Restaurant

Richard received his 25-year APS pin at the show, we acquired some items needed for our business, viewed the exhibits, and we also added some stamps and covers to our personal collections. For instance, Richard located some Prexie postal history items for an exhibit he is preparing and articles he is writing for our newsletter and *MeKeel's and Stamps Magazine*. Figure 2 shows Richard with his 25-year APS certificate and pin.



Figure 2. Richard with His 25-Year Award

In addition to viewing exhibits and spending time in the bourse area, we volunteered to work in the youth area on Saturday and had a great deal of fun working with what we hope will be future collectors and their parents.

Offerings and Specials

Anyone placing their first order with Pederson Stamps on or before September 30, 2009 will be given a one-time 20% discount on their total order of \$10 or more. If a return is made resulting in the total order being less than \$10, an adjustment will be made as part of the return. For

example, on an initial purchase of \$10, Pederson Stamps will apply the discount resulting in a purchase price of \$8. If a \$5 item is returned from this purchase, bringing the total value of the purchase to \$5, only \$3 would be refunded as the discount would no longer apply.

Stamp Collecting Tips

In the last edition I discussed choosing a way of storing and displaying your philatelic items. This time I will talk about how to use some of those storage media for your stamps, covers, and collateral material. First, since stamp albums are probably the most popular method of storing and displaying a collection, I will discuss the ways of mounting items in a traditional stamp album. The three principal methods employed to mount items in an album are stamp hinges, stamp mounts, and mounting corners. Which of these methods you use depends upon personal preference, the amount of disposable income available for purchases of supplies, and the types of items mounted. Following, I will discuss each of these approaches including any benefits and/or limitations associated with the approach. First, I will discuss the use of stamp hinges to mount your philatelic items. Stamp hinges are small rectangular pieces of glassine paper with a water activated adhesive on one side. To mount a stamp using a hinge, you first evenly fold the top third of the hinge over so that the gummed side remains up. You then then lightly moisten (by licking or a sponge) the smaller portion of the gummed side and gently position it slightly below the top of the stamp in the center of the rear of the stamp. You then lightly moisten the bottom (i.e., larger) portion of the gummed side of the hinge and gently position the bottom portion of the hinge on the album page so that the stamp, when laid flat, will rest at the center of the album space in which it is being mounted. DO NOT moisten the entire bottom portion of the hinge as that will make it difficult to lift the stamp once it is mounted and could increase the risk of adhering a gummed or partially gummed stamp to the album page in a manner that will make it difficult to remove the stamp without damaging it or the album page. Stamp hinges are the least expensive way of mounting your stamps in an album and are the preferred way of mounting used stamps. Although stamp hinges can be used to mount mint stamps, keep in mind that once the hinge is attached, the stamp is no longer considered a mint (i.e., as issued) stamp, which is likely to have a bearing on the stamp's resale value. For inexpensive stamps that are unlikely to have any significant appreciation in value, hinges may still be the choice of some collectors rather than purchasing expensive mounts that could cost more than the stamp.

Next, I will discuss stamp mounts. There are many types of mounts available for displaying philatelic items, but all types have some common characteristics. They are made from a special archival quality plastic, they either entirely or partially enclose the stamp in the mounting material, they come in a vast range of sizes, they are available with either clear or black backing, and they usually have water activated adhesive that allows attachment to the album page. Mounts provide an attractive way of displaying and protecting your stamps, but do have a couple of disadvantages: they are relatively expensive, especially for the display of low cost material; and they add bulk to your stamp album which can prevent your pages from lying flat, increases

the weight of the pages, and will result in your needing additional binders to hold your collection. Also, if mounts are not used properly, stamps can be damaged inserting them or removing them from the mounts. Excess application of moisture to the gummed side of the mount can also result in damage to the gum on mint stamps. Rules to follow when using mounts are: (1) make sure the mount is the proper size as a mount that is too small does not give the stamp room to breathe and can result in damaged/bent perforation teeth or creases in the stamps; (2) measure and cut the mount prior to inserting the stamp to avoid accidentally cutting the stamp; (3) limit the amount of moisture applied to the water activated adhesive on the back of the mount to avoid moisture seeping around the edge of the mount where it could come in contact with the stamp that is inserted; and (4) use stamp tongs to insert the stamp in the mount to avoid getting oils or other contaminants transferred from your skin to the stamp. You can avoid some problems (e.g., proper sizing) associated with mounts by buying mounts that are pre-cut and sized to your stamp or by using a hingeless stamp album that already has properly sized mounts attached to the album pages. One thing to consider when looking at hingeless albums is how well they accommodate stamps that are not in the standard format. For example, does the hingeless album allow enough space to mount a plate number or other margin single in the album space allotted for each stamp. Although I have listed several issues to consider when using stamp mounts, they are still the best way to protect your stamps when mounted in a stamp album.

The final way to mount philatelic items in a stamp album is the use of mounting corners. These are small pieces of archival quality paper or plastic that have a triangular shaped pocket into which the corner of a philatelic item (e.g., a cover or collateral item) can be inserted. The bottom side of the corner contains adhesive (water-activated or self-adhesive) to hold the mounting corner in place on the page. A separate mounting corner is used for each corner of the philatelic item to hold it in place. Normally, mounting corners should only be used for covers and collateral material. Although it is possible to use them for stamps, they cost more and are more difficult to use than hinges and they do not provide the protective features of stamp mounts.