

# Favorite Finds



Cheryl R. Ganz with M.T. Sheahan



SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM • WASHINGTON, DC

**I**T GIVES ME great pleasure to welcome you to “Favorite Finds,” the first rotating exhibit to be displayed in the Smithsonian National Postal Museum’s Postmasters Suite. This special exhibits gallery is part of the magnificent new William H. Gross Stamp Gallery. Both the exhibit and the Gross Stamp Gallery opened to the public on September 22, 2013.

“Favorite Finds” brings together an assortment of philatelic articles shared by our Council of Philatelists, philatelic curators, and museum supporters. Each object comes from a different collection and has a different story. Our donors have graciously shared their reasons for holding these items so dear.

Donations in memory of philatelic scholar David Straight supported this publication. David was a member of the Council of Philatelists and an enthusiastic supporter of the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery.

ALLEN KANE, *Director*  
Smithsonian National Postal Museum

# Favorite Finds



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EXHIBITION DATES

September 22, 2013, to January 5, 2014



SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM

Washington D.C.

2013

**C**OLLECTORS AND their collections . . . each unique, each revealing. Examine a philatelic collection closely and you will peer into its owner's lifelong passions. Without fail, one item excites the collector more than any other. Its detail or beauty? Its rarity? The roads it has traveled? "Favorite Finds" brings together an assortment of those cherished items, each from a different home, all with different stories.

"Favorite Finds" exhibitors include members of the Council of Philatelists, philatelic curators, and museum supporters.

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## CONTENTS

### 3–11 Recognizing the Aesthetic

The sheer beauty of a philatelic item often causes a collector's heart to race. *Do I love its color or the penmanship? Are its engraving, composition, and condition exquisite? Does its artistry captivate me? Perhaps it simply charms me.* A collector's personal sense of splendor determines a collection's distinctiveness.

### 12–17 Loving the Details

Collectors sometimes find the magic in the details more fascinating than an object's purpose. *Design elements fascinate me, so I scrutinize an object's markings. Did the printing and production processes create a rare variety? The hope of discovery excites me.* Obscure details direct the hunt, and the collector knows the guide posts.

### 18–26 Exploring World Connections

Mail routes! Researching them captivates some collectors. *I wonder how this piece of mail traveled and what route it took to reach its destination. How long did its journey take and what were the fees? Did obstacles complicate the passage? All the mail's markings help record the route it traveled.*

### 27–33 Preserving History

Collectors enjoy an intimate relationship, rich in memories, with their philatelic collections. *Discovering this little gem delighted me. It is a piece of history that had been hidden away. I gave it new life. The search, the acquisition, the preservation . . . all aspects of a shared history.*

### 34–36 Sharing the Origins of Stamps

Collectors thrive on treasure hunts and sharing their discoveries. Each unique find captures a moment in history and tells a special story. Stories about the origins of pre-paid postage stamps and the communications revolution they ignited fascinate and enlighten people, who often take the tiny square for granted.

*Illustrations are not to scale.*

*\$5 John Marshall essay and die proof, 1902*



ROGER S. BRODY

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“The essays and die proofs of the Series of 1902 epitomize the Bureau of Engraving and Printing’s artistry and craftsmanship. As a specialist of that series, I admire the superb details of these examples from my collection.”

*First Issue Madagascar Specimen Overprint sheet, British Offices in China, 1916*

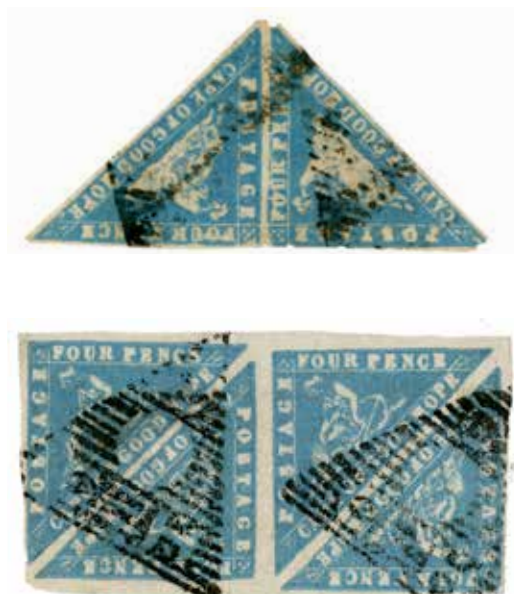


IAN C. GIBSON-SMITH

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“This brilliantly colored sheet is both gorgeous and rare. When I saw it, I couldn’t resist. Buyer’s regret? Never! This page shows the higher values with the SPECIMEN overprint along with the lower, unmarked denominations.”

*Wood Block triangles:  
Tête-Bêche pair and block of four, Cape of Good Hope, 1861*



ANONYMOUS

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“Cape of Good Hope stamps are classic in beauty and simplicity of design. Discovering unique items is challenging and intensifies the hunt’s thrill. This unique error in the setting of the tête-bêche pair (top) contrasts to the largest known multiple (below).”

*New Jersey Manuscript Postmark cover, 1805*



ROBERT G. ROSE

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“I appreciate the postmaster’s ingenuity in applying this manuscript postmark, added before stamps and machine cancels became available. There is still evidence of the compass the postmaster used in ensuring the circular marking was symmetrical.”

*Village Blacksmith Illustrated Advertising cover, 1922*



ELIZABETH HISEY

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“My two passions are cooking and philately. This illustrated cover dates to the time that merchants began using business covers to promote their wares, in this case butchers’ knives.”

*3¢ Washington on fancy Valentine cover, 1862*



KEN GILBART

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“Wow! That’s what I thought when I saw this magnificent Valentine. It’s different than most Valentines of the period—small, delicate, simple like a fragile, lace doily. That it survived the mail in perfect condition is miraculous. Very unusual.”

*Blackjack with Fancy Cancel on Ladies Envelope, 1860s*

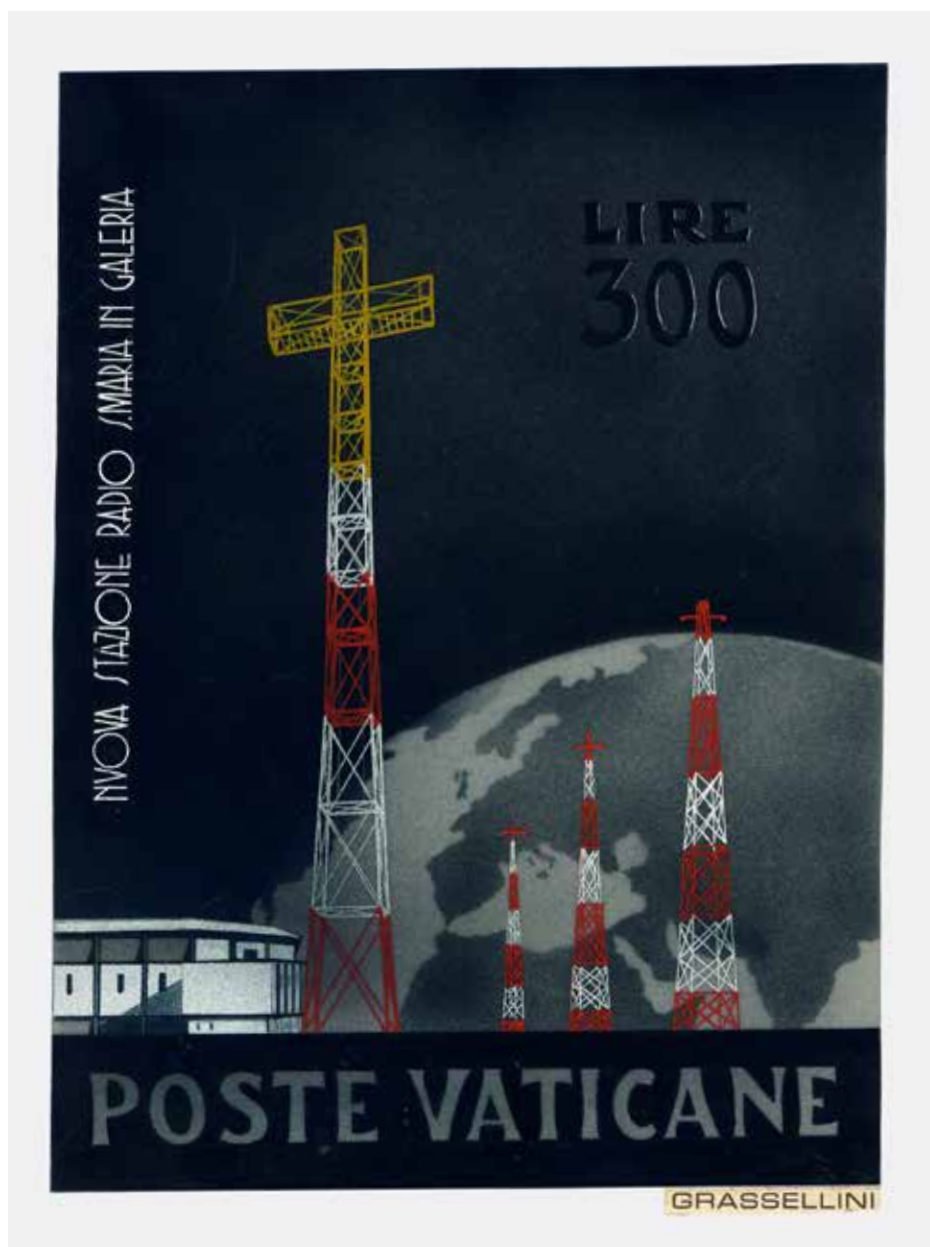


WADE E. SAADI

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“This diminutive cover is petite in every way. It’s a tiny, ladies envelope, and the sender paid a low rate because it traveled only within Saratoga Springs. As a collector of classic U.S. stamps, I find this very special.”

*Vatican City Postage Stamp art, Piero and Andreina Grassellini, 1959*



DANIEL PIAZZA

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“This artwork captivated me because it retains the character of the artists’ original sketches—subtle erasures, redrawing, and pinholes. The purchase launched me as a serious collector because I paid real money for it. What a memorable day!”

*Autographed Quilts of Gee's Bend first day program, 2006*



KAREN BERTHA

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"These bold, beautiful quilt stamps warm my heart and unite my passions—philately and genealogy. They remind me of my family, skilled artisans, African American women, and our long, shared history. They tell our stories, so long ignored."

3¢ Washington Chicago Perforations cover, 1856



GORDON EUBANKS

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“This stamp attracted me as a fine example of entrepreneurship. Before perforated stamps, people cut them apart. Ingenious individuals improvised ways to separate stamps, making business mailings easier before 1857, when the Post Office provided perforated sheets of stamps.”

*30¢ Franklin hand-stamped 'SPECIMEN' card proof, 1860*



MICHAEL PLETT

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“After decades of research, I solved the mystery of card proofs with a ‘SPECIMEN’ handstamp. I determined there are five different handstamps, not two, each applied by a receiving country.”

5 cash “Elephant” design plate proof, China, 1877



THOMAS LERA

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“Finding this rare plate proof for my “bat” exhibit was exciting, as it was the first appearance of a bat on a stamp. The imagery on the stamp promises happiness which, in China, equals heaven.”

*Overprint Error block of four, Canal Zone, 1926*



RICHARD D. BATES, JR.

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“I love this overprint block with error because it is visually so striking. It’s clear how the error occurred—printers at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing inadvertently interchanged the slugs on only one of the four stamps. Very rare indeed.”

*World War II Propaganda blocks of four, Germany, 1944*



Original stamp design



Original stamp design

MARVIN R. MURRAY

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“These two blocks represent an element of World War II philately, which intrigues me. Skilled forced labor in German concentration camps produced these propaganda forgeries of British stamps. Nazis intended to raise doubts, making Brits question their nation’s goals.”

*May Day cachet from May, Texas, 1937*



MAY DAY TAYLOR

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“There’s great fun in discovering philatelic items related to my namesake date, May Day! I have found few, however, as captivating as Florence Edmiston’s cachet mailed May 1, 1937. Striding stylishly into spring, this couple invites everyone to enjoy May Day.”

*2¢ and 13¢ Missionary cover, Hawaii, 1851*



RICHARD MALMGREN

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“I couldn’t resist this 2¢ and 13¢ Missionary combination. Renowned philatelist Alfred Caspary briefly owned it, but quickly returned it to dealer Warren Colson after a damp beverage sitting on it caused the thin pelure paper to curl and tear.”

13¢ Missionary cover, Hawaii, 1852



FRED F. GREGORY

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“This cover is one of the highlights of my Hawaii collection. Artist and missionary wife Persis Goodale Thurston Taylor sent it to Massachusetts via San Francisco and Panama. She prepaid Hawaii and United States postage with a Hawaiian postage stamp.”

*Double Bisect cover, Mexico, 1861*



OMAR J. RODRIGUEZ

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“My first love was Mexico splits. Lacking low denomination stamps, postmasters split higher value stamps to pay low rates. I found this cover twenty years ago, and I am still excited! Two bisects together. What happened to their other halves?”

*Boston to Calcutta cover, 1860*



MARK S. SCHWARTZ

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"This cover, from my 'Boston Mail Sent Overseas' collection, is one of my favorites. It's certainly the most attractive. Its double four-color franking paid for the U.S. inland and transatlantic portion of this letter sent by British Open Mail."

*Africa to USA cover, Sudan, 1875*



PATRICK MASELIS

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“Posted by American Charles Chaillé-Long on January 29, 1875, this fascinating document is the oldest known franked cover to the USA from the heart of Africa. It traveled up the Nile in a metal tube, crossed the Mediterranean, and traversed Europe in a sealed bag before crossing the Atlantic.”

New Zealand to India registered cover, 1937



ROBERT P. ODENWELLER

“The 1935 Pictorial Definitive issue, of which this is an example, led me to specialize in New Zealand in 1944. I have since collected it without pause. Forwarded at least twenty times, this cover finally landed in a dead letter file.”

San Francisco Earthquake cover, 1906



JOHN M. HOTCHNER

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“This rare cover, addressed to a home in the ‘Burnt Dist.,’ was discovered among an accumulation of ‘postage due’ covers. I recognized its significance, analyzed it, and was delighted to include it in my ‘Delays in the U.S. Mails’ exhibit.”

*Graf Zeppelin's Chicago flight on board to  
President Franklin D. Roosevelt cover, 1933*



CHERYL R. GANZ

“I have been a zeppelin enthusiast since childhood. To own this unique envelope that flew by airship on a flight to my favorite city, Chicago, for its world’s fair and later was held and owned by a president is very exciting.”

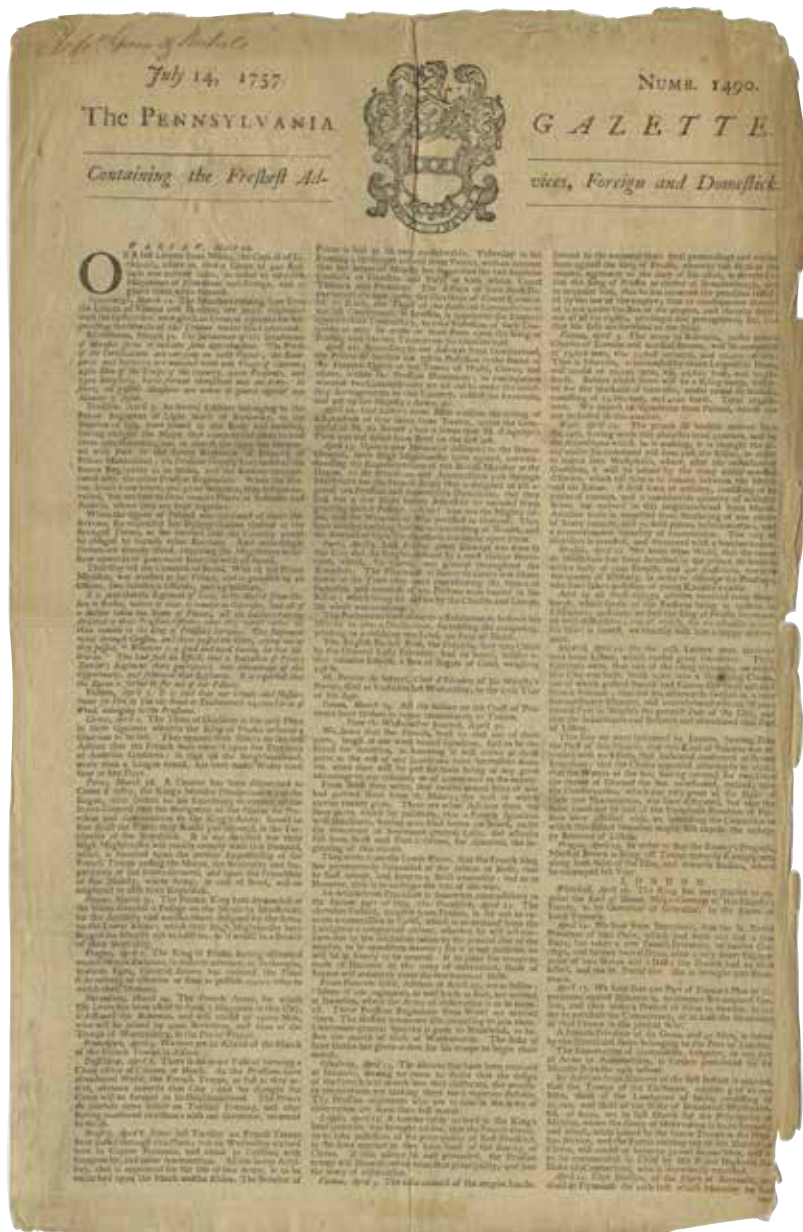
Tin Can Mail cover, Tonga, 1937



JANET KLUG

“The fantastic artwork reminds me that, regardless of weather, outrigger canoes carried mail between ships and Niuafu’ou (Tonga). The island, a volcano’s tip, has no beaches for docking, so mail was tossed overboard in large tin cans for retrieval.”

Newspaper printed by Benjamin Franklin and sent through the post to Boston,  
July 14, 1757



## ROLAND H. CIPOLLA II

“As a student of historical printed matter sent through the mails, I was overjoyed to discover this newspaper published by Benjamin Franklin at his print shop at 320 Market Street, Philadelphia. Franklin was the first U.S. Postmaster General.”

*Postal Reform illustrated cover, 1850s*



DAVID L. STRAIGHT

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“As a scholar of the history of postal systems, I find this postal reform cover particularly appealing. Pliny Miles, secretary of the New-York Postal Reform Committee, used the mails to broadcast his reform agenda. The illustration is telling.”

*Athens, Pennsylvania, cover, 1847*

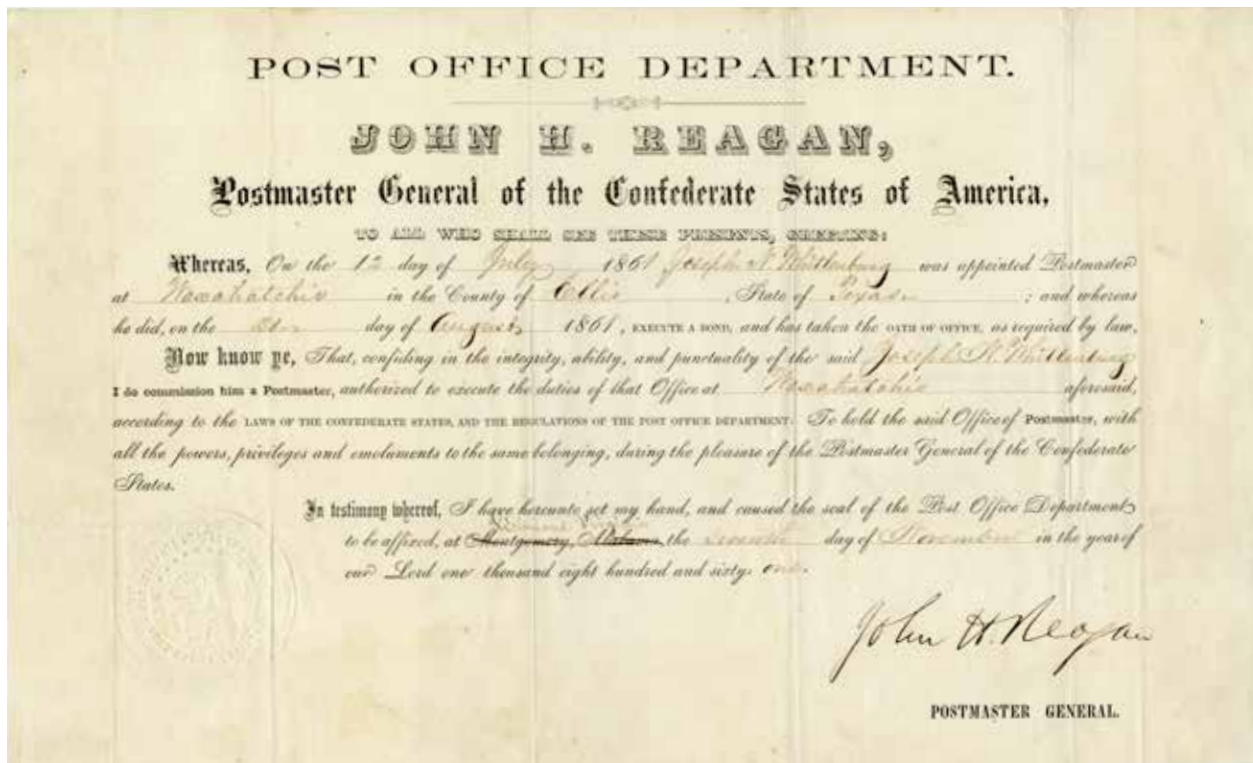


GORDON C. MORISON

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“I have a personal attachment to the enclosed letter because the scene described occurred on the riverbank near my home in Sayre, Pennsylvania. The writer describes her buggy ride and a large group gathered to watch an explosion, which fizzled due to rain.”

Waxahachie, Texas, Confederate Postmaster Commission Certificate, 1861



VINCE AND BECKY KING

“For us this is a particularly exciting philatelic item. As the only Texas certificate known to exist, it illustrates the postal operations aspect of the Confederacy’s mail system. Fewer than ten such certificates exist for the entire Confederacy.”

*Trans-Atlantic Use of Confederate Patriotic cover, CSA, 1861*



PATRICIA A. KAUFMANN

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“The ways Southerners survived the Confederacy’s fractured mail service fascinate me. For instance, the Confederacy used patriotic covers to inspire its citizens. This is one of two recorded Confederate patriotic covers addressed to a foreign destination.”

Internal Revenue Stamps political satire photograph, ca. 1863



HERBERT A. TRENCHARD

“As a scholar of philatelic literature, I immediately found this Carte de Visite exciting. As early philatelic literature, it bears the first photos of U.S. stamps. It also criticizes Lincoln for taxing citizens with revenue stamps to pay for the Civil War.”

*Imported Opium, revenue on original cigarettes container, 1890*



RONALD E. LESHER

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“I’m very interested in the social context of taxation. Opium was once a legal, taxed product, and opium dens were common in San Francisco. This is the only recorded intact survivor of that period. It’s the real thing.”

*Alexandria, Virginia, postmaster provisional, 1846*



Signed by stamp dealer "L.W. Durbin/July 1879" on reverse

WILLIAM H. GROSS

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"The story of stamps in America is the story of America, and I am proud to be part of showcasing these treasures. Alexandria's Postmaster Daniel Bryan issued provisionals, but few survived because patrons often affixed them with wax. This unused cutout shape is one of six known on buff paper."

Annapolis, Maryland, postmaster provisional on cover, 1846



WILLIAM H. GROSS

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"I enjoy sharing the pleasure philately brings me. This example of an Annapolis provisional, one of two recorded, is particularly exciting. Issued by Annapolis Postmaster Martin F. Revell, it bears a negative eagle and shield circular handstamp. He applied the '5' and 'PAID' separately."

Baltimore, Maryland, postmaster provisional pair on cover, 1845



WILLIAM H. GROSS

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“I was very pleased to find this ‘5 Cents’ provisional pair issued and signed by Baltimore’s Postmaster James M. Buchanan. This pair is one of two known multiples of a Baltimore provisional on or off cover. Combined with the postmark and paid markings, receipt of this must have excited Miss Floyd.”

**N**O EXHIBITION CAN be staged without a very talented exhibit team. Pat Burke, exhibits; Michael Devaney, museum specialist; Bill Lommel, website; Patricia Raynor, loan officer; and Terry Sheahan, scriptwriter, deserve special recognition. Thanks also to NPM staff, especially Tom Lera, James O'Donnell, and members of the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery content team: Linda Edquist, Glen Hopkins, Daniel Piazza, Elizabeth Schorr, Roxanne Smith-Symko, and Allison Wickens. Antonio Alcalá and Carol Beehler of Studio A designed the exhibition and the booklet. Minuteman Press of Toledo, Ohio, printed the booklet. The exhibitors who lent their favorite finds demonstrate the benefits of philately and its lifelong learning advantages. I thank them for sharing their treasures and stories.

CHERYL R. GANZ, *Chief Curator of Philately*  
Smithsonian National Postal Museum

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THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation's mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. For more information visit the museum website at [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu).



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