

# THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



ESTABLISHED 1924 • APS CHAPTER NO. 0793-64417 • SINCE 1971

*March - April 2017*  
*Volume 10, Number 2*

## CONTENTS

President's Letter .....	2
Officers & Info.....	2
Programs .....	2
Smoke Signals .....	3
Shows & Events .....	3
Article .....	4
<i>Owney and the Railways Mail</i>	
Article .....	5
<i>Austro-Hungarian Empire Cover 1897</i>	
Stamp of the Month.....	6
Philatelic Phinds.....	6
Variety Hunting .....	7

**THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB**  
WWW.STAMPS.ORG/ASHEVILLE-STAMP-CLUB

**ELECTED OFFICERS**

**President:** Robert Taylor, 828-447-4699  
Email: robertt16@bellsouth.net

**Vice President:** Larry Oliver  
Email: stamper707@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Stan Kumor,  
Email: kumorsm@morrisbb.net

**Secretary:** Jay Rogers  
Email: jaylr232@gmail.com

**Past President:** Ed de Bary  
Email: emdeb@charter.net

**APPOINTED POSITIONS**

**50-50 Fundraiser:** Lucille Lamy

**Auctioneers:** Ed de Bary & Jay Rogers

**Membership:** Larry Oliver

**Journal Editor:** Randall Chet  
Email: randallchet@gmail.com

**WHO TO CALL**

If you cannot make a meeting, club event, presentation, or have a question or a suggestion, please contact:

**Robert Taylor**, 828-447-4699  
Email: robertt16@bellsouth.com

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Asheville Stamp Club meets at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, 1617 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC in the Blue Ridge Room of the Community Center at 1:30 pm on the third Sunday of each month. Bring stamps and covers to sell, trade, or show. There are Nickel Boxes and Envelopes of stamps with new material being added all of the time. The club's 2015 Scott catalogs will be at the meeting; World Classics, World, and US Specialized. As always, there will be the 50-50 Drawing and Door Prizes.

©2017 The Asheville Stamp Club



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As we move through our beautiful and much warmer than normal winter season, it's inspiring to see new faces at each of our club meetings. That means growth for our club when other clubs across North Carolina may not be as fortunate. Some of that growth is attributed to the beautiful facility we meet in and acquired for us free of charge by our former president, Ed deBary.

Our programs are varied, educational and fun for all. Our every other month club auction attracts a plethora of philatelic items that can be acquired for very reasonable prices.

The amount of philatelic knowledge that our membership contains is quite striking. Less experienced members can quickly determine those individuals that can help them significantly in their hobby knowledge growth.

As we move into the rest of the year, I invite all members to willingly participate in all of our club auctions, programs, business segments of our meetings, etc. We are a viable club because of your input and participation.

This is YOUR club and the goal of myself and the other officers is for you to get enjoyment and knowledge from our programs.

See you soon,  
Robert

## PROGRAMS

**March is auction month**, with more country lots from the large collection that was donated to us last fall. These are club lots, so the club gets all the money! There will also be a plate block extravaganza, with many, many M-NH US plate blocks all at 50% of face value. Bring your list, but make sure you have a description beyond the Scott number, because I have not numbered any of these blocks. You will have to recognize by topic and denomination which ones you need.

April's meeting is on the 23rd, delayed one week from our usual date because of Easter. The April program will feature Jim Haxby presenting "Phyling Phool Philately" - come to the meeting to get the complete story. In April we will also have a silent auction of (maybe) the last lots from the donated collection.

## CLUB NEWS

The Asheville Stamp Club has joined the Southeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs, a group of 20+ clubs in this region. Check out the website and our page on the site. ([www.sefsc.org/asheville-stamp-club](http://www.sefsc.org/asheville-stamp-club)) The SEFSC puts on a major World Series of Philately show each year in January, so be thinking of how we can, as a club and individually help out. Start thinking about an exhibit for the show now! The show is in Atlanta, but on the north side of the city, so we do not have to drive through downtown to get to it.

## SMOKE SIGNALS

Some of you may know me from meetings but if not let me introduce myself. My name is Randall Chet and I've been a stamp collector since 11 years old. I'm a graphic designer, have been happily married for almost 30 years to Cathey, who has zero interest in philately. Together we have three grown children, all of whom also have zero interest in philately. Where did I go wrong?

**So how did you get started collecting stamps?** For me it was helping out my grandmother at the local Easter Seals office where she volunteered. In the attic was shoebox after shoebox of old contribution envelopes and my job was to clip the stamp off the corner of each. This would have been about 1975 and to this day one of my favorite stamp sets is the US Rural America commemoratives. Everybody has a story—I want to hear about it!

**As a designer, I'm a visual guy.** I can edit, sure, but I'm much more comfortable pushing pixels around. Hopefully you will like what you see in this first edition of the redesigned Smoky Mountain Philatelist. My goal is to add enough new exciting features to get everyone involved in its creation. Everybody in this club has their own area of expertise. Please contribute and I'll make sure your article looks as beautiful as possible. If you are really ambitious, talk to me about a regular column devoted to a subject you're particularly passionate about. I'm going to contribute a column devoted to revenues for instance. If I can do it, you can too.—I want to hear about it!

Another interesting feature I'd like to introduce is **Philatelic Phinds**. Everyone loves a treasure hunt, and everyone loves hear-

ing stories about finding that pot of gold—even if it is just a tiny one inch square piece of paper. Do you have a tale of intrigue, of a twenty year quest to find that stamp that's been eluding you?—I want to hear about it!



**Many people say stamp collecting is a dying hobby.** I disagree. I don't think the hobby is dying, just changing. Like so many other hobbies, participation is moving online. I spend a lot of time online, both for work and my stamp collecting disease. But I really enjoy the social aspect of getting out to our meetings and attending shows and bourses. This weekend I attended Knoxpex for the second year and was again impressed with the Knoxville club. I met a few new folks and introduced myself. Since our club is now a member of the SEFSC we have the opportunity to participate in more area events. So let's get out there. And If you have some news to share, remember—I want to hear about it!

*If you have any questions, comments, stories, articles, pictures (anything but a political rant), feel free to email them to [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com). I'll do my best to include them in a future issue of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to be your new editor.*

## SHOWS & EVENTS

**March 18th & 19th** Nashville, TN  
Stamp & Postcard Show 2017  
Fifty Forward Senior Center  
301 Madison Street  
Madison, Tennessee 37115  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4  
Contact: Tom Tribke  
[show@nashvillephilatelic.org](mailto:show@nashvillephilatelic.org)  
615-833-5161

**March 25th & 26th** Asheville NC  
Stamp & Postcard Show  
Comfort Suites Inn  
890 Brevard Road  
(next to Biltmore Mall)  
(I-26, exit 33 & NC Hwy exit 191)  
Asheville, North Carolina.  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4  
Contact: Cary Cochran, 800-560-5310

**May 6th & 7th** Charlotte, NC  
Charlotte Stamp Show  
St. Sarkis Armenian Church  
7000 Park Road  
(Hwy 77, exit Tyvola Road, go east 2.5 miles,  
turn right on Park Rd, 1 mile on right)  
Charlotte, North Carolina  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4  
Contact: Cary Cochran, 800-560-5310

**May 12th & 13th** Johnson City, TN  
HOLPEX 2017  
Holston Stamp Club and Bill Vance  
Best Western Hotel & Conference Center  
2406 N. Roan Street  
Johnson City, TN, 37601  
Fri: 10 - 5, Sat: 10 - 5

**May 20th & 21st** Marietta, GA  
Stamp Dealers Association of GA Bourse  
Mansour Center  
995 Roswell Street  
Marietta, GA, 30060  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 3  
Contact: Len Curtis, 404-593-6838  
[collectemall@bellsouth.net](mailto:collectemall@bellsouth.net)

Email your articles, letters, classified ads, auction items, and comments for the Smoky Mountain Philatelist to  
Randall Chet:  
[randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)  
Deadline for the May-June issue:  
April 25th

# OWNEY AND THE RAILWAYS MAIL

Larry Oliver

A Border Terrier, an orphan and abandoned, of uncertain age, wandered into a post office in Albany New York in 1888. It was cold and he soon settled into a comfortable position on some mail bags. He was scruffy and had obviously been on the streets for some time, and this may have been the first warm bed in a long time.

Most people love a dog, and this one immediately won the affection of the mail clerks in the office. He was mild-mannered and loved the affection—and the food—that the clerks gave him. His love of the mail bags as a bed was endearing, and led to some long-term and widespread adventures.

The Albany Post Office daily carried mail to the railway stations, the dog accompanied them on the trips. By this time, he had acquired the name of “Owney”. How that name was chosen is a subject of myth, with numerous speculations in the various literature that surrounds the dog. It is clear that the clerks in Albany named him, for they had a collar and name tag for him with that name on it.



OWNEY.

And its a good thing Owney had that collar and name tag because his introduction to the Railway Mail Service set a pattern that made him a legend. Owney had “adopted” the railroads as his home away from Albany, and was soon hopping rides in the mail cars. The railway mail clerks took to Owney just as the Albany clerks had, and fed him, gave him water, and loved him and his companionship on their trips while sorting the mail.

Owney always slept on the mail bags, with the clerks gently moving him when they needed to open a bag.

It was not long before his travels, first around New York, then far afield around the entire US, gathered attention and adoration. People—not just postal clerks—began adding trinkets to his collar to indicate where he had traveled. A sort of postal charm bracelet! His travels extended to almost every state in the US, and as his collar became too laden with trinkets, the postal clerks would remove some and mail them back to Albany for safekeeping.

John Wanamaker was Postmaster General at the time, and he had a special harness made for Owney to hold the trinkets to relieve the load on his collar.

*Owney honored as a Forever stamp, Scott #4547, 2011*



*Just a few of the tags Owney collected in his travels on the railroads. Images courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum*



Owney literally traveled around the world in 1895. In Tacoma, WA, he boarded a steamship bound for the Orient. He visited China and Japan, collecting trinkets along the way. He even acquired a special postal classification called “Registered Dog Package”. The round-the-world tour took 132 days, going from west to east.

He died in 1897 while on a trip to Toledo, OH. It is reported, albeit unconfirmed, that he got upset and bit a postal worker, who then shot him. Autopsy confirmed that he died of a gunshot wound.

Owney traveled over 140,000 miles during his sojourn as a Railway mail mascot. He visited several thousand cities and accumulated over 1,000 trinkets and medals. He was greeted by crowds at most places in the last 6-7 years of his life—his fame had spread widely.

There are several anecdotes that persist about his life and experiences. The most credible of which include his jumping off a train when a mail bag fell off as it was leaving a station and staying with it until it was retrieved and his being given a passport when he arrived in Japan.

That he was loved is not in question. Such an experience could not be duplicated today for a variety of reason, not withstanding the multiple restrictive regulations under which the USPS operates.

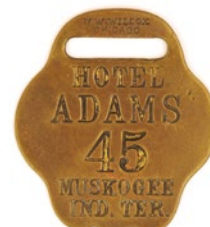
He was honored with a US stamp, #4547 in 2011.



*Owney's body was collected and is now preserved, along with his harness and the medals, in the Smithsonian Postal Museum in Washington, DC. All dog lovers should see it.*

**References:**

- Smithsonian National Postal Museum website
- Owney: Mascot of the Railway Mail Service, National Postal Museum. 1992
- Multiple websites, not all verifiable but enjoyable and enlightening nevertheless
- Numerous short articles from various philatelic magazines and journals.



# AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE COVER 1897

Larry Oliver

Some covers are straightforward, philatelically, but carry a lot of interesting information about the times in which they were used.

*This is one such example.*

The envelope itself was pre-printed for its intended use as a mailer for banknotes. The form printing on the left front allows for the listing of various kinds of bank documents, with the amounts, even a space for the sum of them. In the upper left corner is a logo with the words: "Postwerthzeichen/Preis pr Stück 1 kr", which literally translates to: "postworthy character/price per piece 1 kr". The form has been filled in by the sender, who also applied two wax seals over the flap on the reverse.

A word about currency: the official currency in Austria at this time was the gulden, made up of 100 kreuzer. However, we see the abbreviation "fl" on this envelope. That stands for forint, the Hungarian currency, but not used in that part of the Empire. The forint was in term derived from the florint, the currency that originated in 13th century Florence, and was widely used in Europe for many years. The term stuck, even though the currency changed, and at the time of this cover, "fl" was often used on documents, but meant "gulden". Sort of like our use of "bucks" for dollars. It was two years after this cover that the currency changed to the Krone/Heller system.

*Below:  
"A postworthy  
character/price  
per piece 1 kr."*

The postmarks on Austria #55 & 57 are very clear, and indicate it was mailed from Pontafel Bahnhof on 11 December 1897. "Bahnhof" is the term for train station, and Pontafel is a city which, in 1897, was in Austria, at the border with Italy. Some further research found that the train line there was the kk Staatsbahn (state railway) Tarvis-Pontafel, which was built in 1897, and ended in Pontafel. The city itself was across the Fella River from Ponteba, a city of comparable size, about 1700 people, in Italy.

On the reverse is a hand stamp: "Johann Mamprecht/spediteur/Pontafel Ponteba". This man functioned as a carrier, a type of forwarding agent, and took the cover across the bridge and hence across the border into Italy, where it entered the postal stream in that country. The Italian postal clerks noted its weight, 13 grams, in the upper left and, in the lower right, put the current Italian rate, 6 grams for 50 ct. Accordingly, they assessed it a tax of 25 ct, noted in the upper right of the front. The cover was received in Venezia on 12 December 1897, and back stamped there.

A couple other pieces of history come out from researching this cover. Despite having different currencies and being in different countries, the people of Pontafel and Ponteba were both of Italian origin, divided by governments. After WWI, the border of Italy was moved northward along the Canal Valley holding the Fella River, up to Tarvis. In 1924, the two cities combined and are now called Pontebba. The railroad survived and became a vital link between Germany and Italy in WWII and as such was heavily bombed by the Allies, but not destroyed. The combined city of Pontebba is still small, about 1600 people, and is a tourist site for vacationing in the nearby mountains.



## KING EDWARD VII PURPLE - SCOTT #95

*Robert Taylor*

The beautiful King Edward series of 1903-1908 was comprised of seven stamps: beginning with the #89 one cent green up to the last issued stamp in October, 1908, the beautiful 50 cent purple. This gorgeous stamp with a very regal photo of King Edward facing left is the most expensive stamp in the series and most sought after—especially with nice centering which is not that prevalent. Current Scott Catalog values are around \$2,350 for MNH; \$950 for MH and about \$175 used with light cancel. Those with heavy cancels can be obtained for much less.



The stamp to the left is from my personal collection and is nicely centered and MNH. There is a slight mark on it below the “C” in Canada which I believe is a light surface stain but I don’t want to mess with it. ((\*\_\*)).



*Collecting Canada is fun and historical and their stamps are reasonably priced and available. Enjoy your collecting!*

### PHILATELIC PHINDS

## MATTHEW BRADY STUDIO CANCEL *Randall Chet*

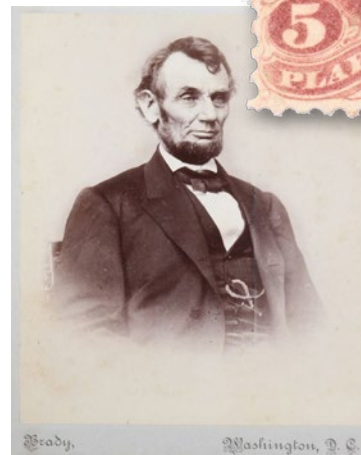
The US Civil War was responsible not only for the Federal Govt’s first adhesive revenues, but for some of the more interesting cancels stamped or printed upon them. One of the items taxed to help pay for the Civil War, were novel and popular photocard, quaintly referred to as “sun pictures”. From August 1864 to August 1866, photo studios were required to pay tax on all photographs, verified by cancelled revenue stamps applied to the back of them (usually using Proprietary or Playing Cards first issue revenue stamps).

Mathew B. Brady (May 18, 1822 – January 15, 1896) was one of the first American photographers, best known for his scenes of the Civil War. Brady also photographed 18 of the 19 American Presidents from John Quincy Adams to William McKinley. His Abraham Lincoln photographs have been used for the \$5 bill and the Lincoln penny. Brady’s studio was located in Washington DC.

I have been on the lookout for a Brady script cancel ever since seeing Bruce Baryla’s excellent “The Civil War Sun Picture Tax” exhibit (<http://web.newsguy.com/bruceb/london/exhibit01.htm>)

Brady’s studio used two known script cancels, both made with with the same metal type slugs used to imprint photograph mounts. One, the most common, was the name “Brady” set in a formal cursive font. The other, much more difficult to find, was “Washington” set in the same font.

I was fortunate to find my Brady cancellation while going through a dealer’s revenue stock at the Columbia show January 21. While not a perfect strike, the presence of this cancel changes a run-of-the-mill \$40 R28c into a \$250 - \$300 retail item. Keep your eye out for those interesting cancels and other philatelic phinds!



*Matthew Brady Studio cabinet card like what this stamp could have been found on.*

# VARIETY HUNTING

Scott Martz

As many of you know I love the thrill of the hunt for elusive varieties. As you know I love Washington Franklin era stamps which are loaded with scarce and rare perforation, watermark, and type varieties. But last month while searching a group of Revenue Stamps in a collection belonging to Robert Taylor, I came across something interesting. It was a beautiful full double transfer on a 2 cent blue proprietary revenue stamp. See a couple of photos below.

This specific variety is NOT listed in the Scott US Specialized album. There are 2 other very scarce and bold double transfers listed, and pictured. But this is not one of them. So, I had to do some research as to what I actually had found. Because without the variety this is a 25 cent stamp at most. So what is the value with the variety?

I started digging around some revenue expert sites, and found one person (a collector mostly) who had a photo that matched the doubling of my stamp perfect-

ly. He listed the variety as extremely rare. I contacted him and asked about scarcity and value in his opinion. He explained that he was aware of only 3 other copies of this variety. The copy I found being the 4 known to him. He felt that full retail value of the variety at a retail stamp shop could be as much as \$800.

I then contacted a few other dealers about value, and most thought the stamp was really interesting, but they were hesitant on value since it has never sold at auction before. But it is clearly a rare piece and has much more value than the 25 cents of a normal stamp. There are a lot of rare and interesting varieties out there. Many are valuable, and highly prized by specialists. There is gold out there in some of those junk lots.

I will highlight additional interesting varieties in my collection and from other collectors collections in the future.

Happy Hunting,  
Scott

