

E. J. Stebbins
Adrian
Mich.
U. S.

TORONTO PHILATELIC JOURNAL



DEVOTED TO THE INTEREST OF STAMP COLLECTORS.

Vol. I.

TORONTO, CANADA, OCTOBER, 1885.

No. 8.

Why Some Stamps were Issued.

A reply to Mr. Best's article in the September issue of this journal

BY THEODORE SIDDALL.

Mr. Best's article on "Why some Stamps were Issued" covers the ground as far as Canadian and other British American possessions are concerned, but he gets out of his depth on the subject of United States stamps, whereas, he says, the 24c. stamp is an odd figure. So it is, but at the time the stamp was first issued, about 1856, the postage to Great Britain was 24 cents. The 30c. and 90c. values are odd values, and are now kept up, no doubt, because people are used to them; the reasons for their adoption are not now generally known. The carriers' stamps, which, by-the-way, are quite rare, were issued only in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, and were affixed to letters which were to be delivered by carriers, the carrier receiving one cent, the value of the stamp, for each letter so delivered. The stamps were not used on letters that were sent to other points, and may justly be called locals.

With the adoption of the free delivery system, in 1863, the carriers' stamps were abolished, and the rate on drop letters was fixed at 2 cents, which made it necessary to issue a two-cent stamp. In 1866, shortly after the death of President Lincoln, the ocean postage was reduced to 15 cents, and accordingly a new stamp was prepared, which bears a splendid likeness of President Lincoln.

In 1869, the first six-cent stamp was issued for double-rate letters, and the 12c. stamp (12 cents then being the letter-rate to Europe) bears an ocean

steamship. The 3c. stamp, for inland postage, has a representation of a train of cars. The engine is of a pattern, which would be regarded as decidedly antique, if it should make an appearance on any railroad near Philadelphia now, such has been the progress of the railroad since 1869.

In or about 1870, ocean postage was again reduced this time to six cents, and, fancy designs not being popular, portraits were again used, that of Lincoln again gracing the stamp for foreign postage. To Germany and one or two other places, postage was 7 cents; England and others, 6 cents, while postage to other countries was fixed at various amounts, from 7 to 25 cents per half ounce. Postage being still further reduced to 5c., in 1875, a five-cent stamp was then issued. Our special delivery stamps are the first of the kind in the world, and should have been issued ten years ago.

In envelope stamps no values are used except the 1, 2, 4, 5 and 10 cent. I doubt if as many as two thousand a year of 30c. and 90c. envelopes are used in the United States. The many odd values, sizes, dies, colors, watermarks and papers make a study in themselves.

During Grant's administration, when raids on the treasury, land grabs and other jobbery was going on, there was a scheme started to take the printing from the government office, and give it to the New York companies, and in order to give them a good thing, about 90 kinds of official stamps were concocted. There was a separate plate of 200 stamps engraved for each value and kind, at a cost to the government of \$5,000, and the bank note companies got besides, about 90

cents a 1000 for printing of the stamps. The high values of State Department were used to prepay books to foreign countries; these being always sent sealed, cost a great deal in postage. The stamps did not cost the departments anything; when they ran out, they would make a requisition on the postmaster for more, but they had to account for every stamp, so it will be seen why unused specimens could not be gotten at postoffices. The stamps were merely checks upon the employes of the government, to prevent them from using the mails under cover of official business. I have seen box-lids upon which were pasted as many as forty 90c. Treasury Department stamps. They were used on large packing-cases of revenue stamps which were sent to the Philadelphia office. The boxes measured 3 feet each way, and weighed when full one or two hundred pounds, postage upon which was paid at the rate of one cent an ounce. The boxes would be taken to the Washington office of Adams' Express, and a treasury official, armed with a few sheets of stamps and a bucket of paste, stood by while the box was being weighed, and then affixed stamps to the box, which was then forwarded by express, not having been in the post-office at all. The department would then pay the regular express rates on the box! Official stamps were abolished by an Act of Congress of June, 1884.

A set of Turkish paper money is among the most valuable possessions of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia. The particular value of this set arises from the fact that no bank notes are now used in Turkey, the many forgeries compelling the government to stop their circulation.