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# Book Reports

May – June 2013 Volume 10, Issue 3

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## STAMPS DELIVER KNOWLEDGE

### Looking Back on our First Decade

Charles Neyhart and Greg Alexander

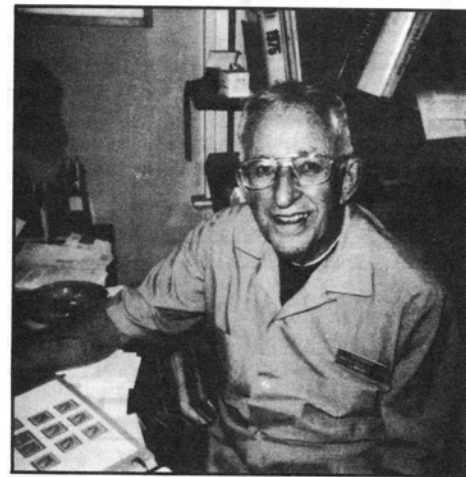
**A**s a library, we've been around a lot longer than 10 years. But this year, the Northwest Philatelic Library celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an independent, not-for-profit organization. Our home is still the basement of the Oregon Stamp Society clubhouse, and we don't expect to be going anywhere, so it's easy to overlook the fact that the Library is a distinct entity. We are governed by our own board separate from the OSS, with our own mission and vision. This seems like an appropriate time for a retrospective on what we are and how we got here.

#### A slow but thoughtful start

In 2000, discussions began on the idea of "spinning off" the library. The view was that becoming a separate entity would make more resources available for the library to function and better serve collectors and non-collectors alike.

The idea of "converting" the library was a progressive move and did face some initial dissent. Although we share a common membership (OSS members have dual membership in the NPL), and the library remains housed in clubhouse space (rented at a very nominal fee), our agenda and priorities differ from that of a stamp club.

Rather than exclusively serving the needs of OSS members, NPL also acts as a regional library resource for the Pacific Northwest and beyond. This includes a commitment to a broader public apart from stamp collectors, such as educators and students, administrators of estates and trusts, investors, and other libraries. The NPL provides philatelic information and services not easily available to these individuals and groups.



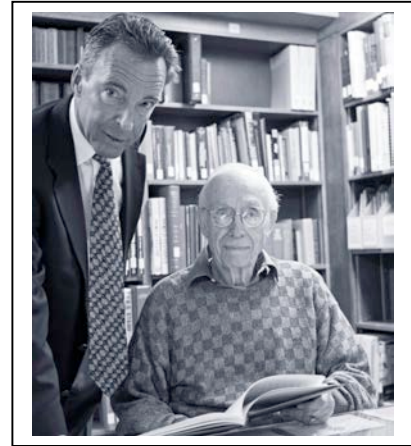
Harold Peterson took on the task of organizing the library within the OSS during the 1980s and '90s. His work cataloging library acquisitions formed the core of our current records database.

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Over several years we slowly moved towards independence, creating our own by-laws and constitution. In 2003, the Northwest Philatelic Library, Inc. was granted 501(c)(3) status by the IRS and became a legally separate group from the Oregon Stamp Society.

### **What's on our shelves**

The long-lived collection that the NPL inherited from OSS was quite extensive, containing many classic “philatelic treasures.” A 1985 inventory showed about 2,400 books and catalogs in the collection, 1,744 bound periodicals with more than 150 titles, and eight file drawers of clippings. To keep track of our inventory, in the early 1990s LibraryWorld software was purchased – at that time packaged on 20 mini-disks – and over the intervening years several dozen volunteers entered information about each book and each periodical/journal title. (Considerable time was later spent standardizing records, as it became apparent that volunteers had varying ideas about what information to include and how to enter it.)



Past President Charles Neyhart (left) and Secretary Emeritus Tom Current were instrumental in founding the Northwest Philatelic Library.

By the time NPL was formed in 2003 the catalog had grown to roughly 3,500 records. We continue slowly filling in with careful purchases and fortuitous donations, mindful of the responsibility for the preservation of archival materials. Numerous members graciously accepted our challenge to “sponsor” a philatelic journal, growing our list of periodical titles to more than 170, and preserving working capital for use in other important ventures.

Presently the NPL collection numbers nearly 5,300 items, an expansion of 50 percent over the last decade. It's no surprise that library staffers have done some major reorganization in recent years to fit the collection on our dwindling shelf space.

### **Specialties lead to partnerships**

Conversations with members of other philatelic libraries at the 2007 APS Show helped clarify the NPL vision. From this, we decided to concentrate on subject matter areas that are close to us or in which we are particularly strong, rather than trying to copy the general-purpose collections of better resourced libraries. To that end, we identified five “specialty” collections within our general collection: Great Britain, United States, Air Mail, Northwest Postal History, and youth stamp collecting.

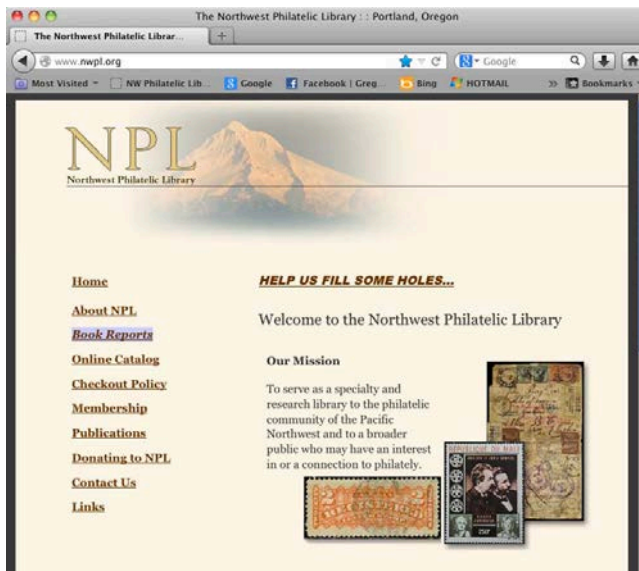
Defining these specialty areas not only helped focus our literature acquisitions, but also dovetailed with another priority – connecting with like-minded organizations. Our goal is to spur greater use of the library collection and become a viable resource to groups beyond the OSS. The Affiliates program, established in 2004, formalized connections with such groups, extending benefits such as check-out privileges to affiliate members. Formal affiliations to date include the Pacific Northwest Postal History Society, Northwest Chapter of the American Air Mail Society, and Youth Stamp Collectors International, Inc. (which has since dissolved).

We also interact regularly with the American Philatelic Research Library, most recently adding our database of records to their Union Catalog, as have most other philatelic libraries across the country. NPL has an established an inter-library checkout policy with some of these groups to expand the accessibility of our collection.

## Communicating in the digital age

A primary task of any organization is to communicate the work it's doing, in our case library activities and available resources, and how members are using those resources. Our "Book Reports" newsletter was launched in 2004, to showcase philatelic research and keep our membership informed. Initially the newsletter was published monthly and mailed jointly with the OSS newsletter, "The Album Page." In 2010, as a cost- and time-saving measure, "Book Reports" shifted to an electronic format, available at no cost on the NPL website and via email. Later that year, the newsletter went to bimonthly distribution. (Interested members

should contact [nwpl@qwestoffice.net](mailto:nwpl@qwestoffice.net) to be added to the email list.)



In 2007, we added a more interactive form of communication: a website. Library World, our cataloging database, had shifted to an online format, which simplified record entry and made the database more searchable. It also allowed the NPL to provide public online access to our entire "card catalog" by linking to it when we launched our new website, [www.nwpl.org](http://www.nwpl.org). A web designer was hired to build the site, which was reviewed and fine-tuned for nearly a year before going live.

We were a little slow to develop an Internet presence, but the website's clean design and functionality has been well received. Along with the searchable online catalog, it provides an archive of past and current issues of "Book Reports," a downloadable list of available tear sheets, check out policies, membership benefits and contact information.

## Revenue to expand resources

As a tax-exempt non-profit corporation, NPL can and does raise its own committed resources through donations to expand and improve its collection, and create user programs. We have been fortunate over the years to receive financial contributions and a number of significant gifts of literature and philatelic material, with minimal active fundraising. Early on, a major stamp collection was donated and later sold at auction, netting NPL some crucial working capital.

Thanks to the frugal guidance of NPL's first treasurer, Wayne Holmes, we have remained fiscally responsible, balancing new acquisition purchases against our income. In 2011, we

attempted our first fundraising campaign, with modest success. We expect to refine our efforts going forward.

### **Reaching out to others**

Outreach is a critical piece of our mission. Along with our website and newsletter, many other methods have been initiated, such as:

- Submitting introductory articles to key philatelic publications
- Publishing “Specialty and Research Library for the Community,” a brochure distributed to financial planners, appraisers, auction houses, schools, youth groups, retirement centers, and local libraries
- Extending affiliate membership opportunities to regional stamp clubs
- Creating the publication series *Tips for Collectors*, intended to help readers develop and expand their philatelic knowledge, skills, and enjoyment.
- Preparing a flier entitled “So You’ve Inherited a Stamp Collection and Don’t Know What to Do with It.” This has become one of the most visited links on our website.
- Representing the NPL with a literature table at major local stamp shows, as well as conducting seminars and providing out-of-town visitors with library tours
- Participating in a six-week exhibit of philatelic material at Portland’s Central Library
- Periodically presenting programs at regular meetings of the Oregon Stamp Society

Looking back, our beginnings involved a rather steep learning curve, lots of paperwork, drawn-out discussions, and some panic points. But the Northwest Philatelic Library still feels a growing enthusiasm and confidence in building a more useful philatelic institution for our region. We look forward to the growth and challenges that the next decade will present.

### **OUR MISSION**

The Northwest Philatelic Library exists:

To promote the use of our collection of philatelic resources, and to make it available at no cost to our members and to the wider community;

To expand the available holdings of up-to-date publications and periodicals;

To make our library services fit the needs of the members and to incorporate their suggestions into our operations;

To provide a congenial meeting place where stamp collectors, researchers, and the general public can find answers about identification, history, and values. We hope to promote the idea of stamp collecting as a satisfying pastime;

To continue to expand the ways of getting the most from our information;

To provide access to additional resources such as other libraries, online databases, specialized collecting organizations, and the like; and

To preserve and promote the rich heritage of philatelic literature and put the artifacts of philately into a broader historical perspective.

# Finding Value in Philatelic Literature

Charles Neyhart

For years, I've been extolling the virtue of studying your stamps. This means going beyond Scott. There is potentially much value in this undertaking – becoming more knowledgeable and a more discerning collector. Eventually collectors tend to bump up against philatelic matters that demand specialized knowledge. Such knowledge usually emerges from detailed research findings published in the philatelic literature. These research findings are intended to tell us something about a stamp, a cover, or a usage that satisfies curiosity and adds richness and a depth of understanding to collecting these items.

This article is a continuation of studying a variation of a stamp that has defied proper classification for 20 years – the ordinary 29¢ Flag Over White House coil, Scott 2609, printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and issued in 1992. I've written about this stamp before in these pages.<sup>1</sup> Yet, questions still remained. Now, information newly published in the philatelic literature provides useful information possibly a basis for figuring out what next to do.

## Color Error or Freak?

My colleague, Steve Chown, traded me one of two identical plate numbered coil strips of five of the 29¢ Flag Over White House in which the intended blue color on these stamps looked very dark and very wrong! These two strips came from the same roll of 100. A comparison of a normal strip [PMS 295 blue] and the nonstandard blue Subject strip is shown in Figure 1. [NOTE for paper copy readers: Color images can be viewed by downloading “Book Reports” from [www.nwpl.org/newsletter](http://www.nwpl.org/newsletter)]



Figure 1. Above = Normal blue, Below – the nonstandard blue Subject.

To investigate this color difference, I traced its discovery to a series of 1993-94 articles in *The Plate Number* and *Coil Line* journals. Various names were attached to the darker nonstandard color of these stamps – indigo blue, navy blue, and Chicago blue – suggesting

<sup>1</sup> November 2009 and Sept-Oct 2012.

that the color might not be uniform. The consensus was an “error from the use of the wrong colored ink produced the nonstandard color; although some writers argued it was simply the result of ink contamination from a commingling of the red and blue inks in the blue ink fountain.

In addition, the nonstandard color was found only on stamps printed from Sleeves 6 and 7, yet my stamps were from Sleeve 8.<sup>2</sup> I then checked the printing records from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and found that Sleeves 6, 7 and 8 had all been at press on three separate occasions in 1992 and 1993. Consequently, I submitted my strip to APEX for certification. Despite presenting what I believed to be a strong case for treating this as a catalog-worthy color variety, the 2008 APEX certificate stated that the irregular color was probably due to ink contamination occurring in the blue ink fountain. That is, it was a philatelic freak.

### Never Say Never

Not fully agreeing with the APEX position, I undertook research to develop alternative explanations for the nonstandard blue color, focusing on the operation of the C and D presses used to print the Flag Over White House and their inking-in systems. Northwest Philatelic Library had the requisite resources for this purpose. I formulated five plausible reasons to explain how the nonstandard color could have resulted. Two of those I subsequently judged as unlikely, one I deemed impractical, and a fourth, despite having strong intuitive appeal, couldn't be reliably tested. That left the fifth reason – ink contamination. This matched the APEX position. All of that notwithstanding, there were still things about this that just didn't seem to add up.

I contacted the editor of *Coil Line* apprising him of the APEX opinion and asked if he might be interested in resurrecting the discussion about the nonstandard color of this stamp. A discussion thread then resumed in *Coil Line* during 2008, again without resolution, but, because *Coil Line* now had color printing capabilities, it was clearer that there was more than one “wrong” blue color.

Then, out of the blue (!), the 2011 Scott catalog included a new minor color variety, 2609c, Indigo blue. Steve and I were certainly surprised to note this and equally perplexed because there was no stated reason for the addition after all these years. I resubmitted my strip of five for certification as the color variety. The 2012 APEX opinion states, in part, that the strip was **Scott 2609c, indigo blue** and red. Of course I was pleased to add this newly-minted “color variety” to my collection as more than something that was just “interesting;” yet, the question still remained: What caused the nonstandard indigo blue color?

### New Research

The article “What Color is the White House?” by Richard J. Nazar published in the March 2013 issue of *The United States Specialist* was intended to distinguish, through technical

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<sup>2</sup> On the rotary presses used to print these stamps, a continuous cylindrical “sleeve” replaced the conventional matched set of curved printing plates. Writers often use these terms interchangeably.

analysis, the various nonstandard blue colors associated with the Flag Over White House. Nazar chose those labels that had been used previously in the literature – normal blue, indigo blue, indigo blue, navy blue, Chicago blue and light blue. [The last listed color was previously unknown to me.] Images of these from the cover of the *Specialist* are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Comparisons of the blue color varieties of Scott 2609. Normal color is the center stamp. Top left – indigo blue, Top right – navy blue, Bottom left – Chicago blue, Bottom right – light blue.

With technical support provided by the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers University, two non-destructive tests using X-ray fluorescence and spectroscopy were applied to the variously colored varieties to determine whether there were any chemical differences in the papers and inks of these stamps.

The analysis revealed that the paper used for all stamps was identical with only trace differences of fillers and brighteners [e.g., the navy blue stamp contained more titanium, a white extender]. The analysis also revealed that the blue inks for the array of stamps were composed of a common blue pigment<sup>3</sup> but with different particle sizes and crystalline forms, called polymorphs. The different polymorphs in combination with the concentration of pigment caused the different hues of the stamps. The most expensive polymorph of the blue pigment was used on the indigo stamp. The Chicago blue stamp used a more expensive blue pigment. Nazar [p. 128] summarizes:

[T]he “Indigo,” Navy Blue” and “Light Blue” varieties were the result of using inks with different manufacturing characteristics that resulted in varying observable colors. The “Chicago Blue” White House coil stamps, however, are the result of using a blue ink with a different pigment...

<sup>3</sup> Chemically referred to as (C.I. Pigment Blues 15: x).

Interestingly, the chemical analysis also clarified that there was no evidence of cross-contamination of the red and blue inks used to print the stamps.

### **Putting the Matter to Rest?**

Nazar's results are important in this longstanding issue. He has given us new information and verified things that have heretofore been merely conjectural. But that aside, there are still unanswered questions of how and why this situation occurred as it did. Keep in mind that the initial printing order for the Flag Over White House was for 7,035,928,000 stamps and a total of 17 sleeves were used to print the stamps over its three-year production period. Were the variations in inks a result of different processing steps at the Bureau, purchasing from different suppliers or from some other factor such as an error of color selection?

Another unresolved matter is why the nonstandard colors appear on only three of the 17 sleeves used – 6, 7 and 8. There are, of course, normal blue prints from those sleeves. As was noted earlier, those three sleeves were at press together on three separate occasions.<sup>4</sup> Assuming that sleeves were used in roughly the same order as they were made, it makes me wonder why printings from earlier or later sleeves did not experience this color phenomenon. Then, given the wide visual variation between the normal and nonstandard blues, why weren't the nonstandard stamps flagged and pulled as being defective? This last point, of course, begs the question of how many of these nonstandard stamps exist.

To date, Scott only lists one color variety, indigo blue, but Nazar's findings cast some doubt as to whether Scott's variety actually matches the research results or is simply a generic name applied to the darker blues found on these stamps.<sup>5</sup> So, perhaps Nazar's results will now inform the catalog editors.

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## **Stop by our table at PIPEX**

The Northwest Philatelic Library will staff a table at the PIPEX show, May 24-26 at the Red Lion Hotel on the River, Jantzen Beach. Along with dispensing information about library resources, we will also be selling a large assortment of duplicate books and literature accumulated in the last year. Be sure to drop by and see what bargains you can find!

The Northwest Philatelic Library will also be leading an informational seminar on Saturday, May 24 from 10-11 a.m. in the Glisan Room. You'll find more information and a complete schedule of events at [www.pipexshow.org](http://www.pipexshow.org).

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<sup>4</sup> 9/92, 2/93 and 5/93.

<sup>5</sup> Nazar shows a distinctive shading feature to distinguish the indigo blue stamps from the others.



# Book Review: Fundamentals of Philately

Isaac Oelgart

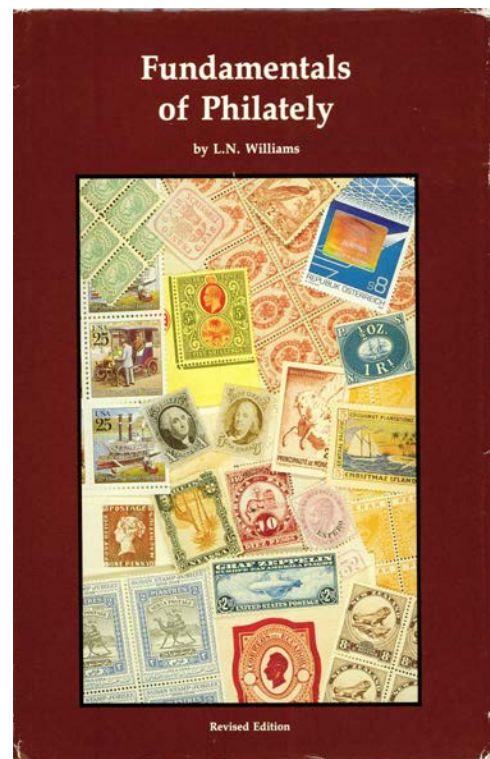
**Fundamentals of Philately**, Revised Edition, 1990, L.N. Williams and (uncredited) Maurice Williams, American Philatelic Society.

Stamp collectors approach their stamp collecting interests in a myriad of ways, subjects and budgets. The thing that all stamp collectors have in common is that by nature, they are a curious lot. In many cases that curiosity manifests itself in the minutia of stamp collecting: plate variations, color variations, perfins and cancellations, etc. For me and many other stamp collectors, learning about stamps, in all their aspects, is an enjoyable and important part of collecting.

In the progression of being a stamp collector and building a stamp collection, curiosity about how stamps are made is one of the more common diversions. When that happens L.N. Williams' *Fundamentals of Philately*, is the go-to book.

*Fundamentals* starts with a brief chapter on *Philatelic Trends* and related terms, followed by another brief chapter on the *Aims of Collecting*. These two chapters provide a very good introduction to stamps and stamp collecting. The heart and bulk of the book, approximately 750 pages, deals with stamp production. There are sections on: *Paper*; *Watermarks*, which is really part of the paper making process; *Stamp Design*, which deals more with the technical aspects than the artistic ones; *From Design to Issued Sheets*. Two sections on *Printing Problems and Varieties and Printing Characteristics*, set the stage for the next five sections, approximately 300 pages on the various printing techniques used in stamp production. *Intaglio Printing – Line Engraving and Intaglio Printing -Gravure*; *Planographic Printing*; *Embossing*; and lastly *Relief Printing* are covered in detail and each of these sections has a glossary of its own on related terms. Further sections round out the book: *Inks and Color*; *Gum*; and *Separation*, most of which is on perforation, but information on other stamp separation techniques are discussed in detail as well.

The reference is very readable, even the most technical parts, and to call it informative would be a great understatement! It is encyclopedic and can be read cover to cover, or by individual chapters, or as I sometimes do by perusing the “Related Terms Defined” at the end of each section. There is an excellent 60 page index that can get the reader directly to their point of inquiry. Recently I came across an offering that used the word “Bromide”, which I did not know in its philatelic context, in describing a stamp. The index directed me to page 89 and my query was sated.



*Fundamentals* was originally published in installments in the *American Philatelist* in 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963. Sections 1-5 were revised and published separately in 1958, 1960, 1963, 1966, 1969. It was first published in book form in 1971. These earlier works were co authored by L.N. Williams' brother, Maurice Williams. The Williams brothers shared a collaboration spanning forty plus years and 30 publications, studying and writing about stamps beginning in 1938 with the publication of *The Propaganda Forgeries: A History and Description of the Austrian Bavarian German Stamps Counterfeited by Order of the British Government During the Great War 1914-1918*.

That *Fundamentals* has been around in some form or another for nearly sixty years and that it has been reprinted many times and is *still* in print and available from the American Philatelic Society is a testament to the book's worthiness. This book appeals to every stamp collector and if you don't already know of this book come to the NPL and literally and figuratively "check it out."

The NPL also has copies of Winthrop S. Boggs' *Foundations of Philately* and John Easton's rewriting of Fred Melville's *The Making Of Stamps*, both of which cover some of the same ground, but not quite as thoroughly.

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## **Don't Miss our Birthday Party in July!**

On Saturday, July 27, 2013, the Northwest Philatelic Library, as we know it today, will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary (prior to that it was known as the Harold D. Peterson Library). The library has grown significantly in the past decade. Please stop by and check out what's new on our shelves.



We will host an open house on that Saturday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., including a free barbecue from noon to 3 p.m., serving hot dogs and hamburgers with all the trimmings – and, of course, a cake. At 12:30 we will have a short program sharing the history of the Northwest Philatelic Library, and our vision for the future.



## New on our Shelves

*The following resources have been added to our collection:*

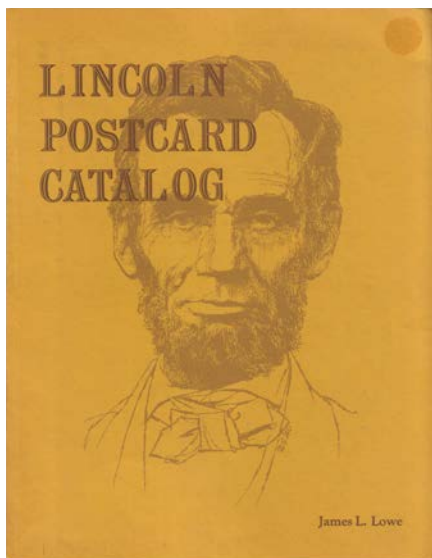
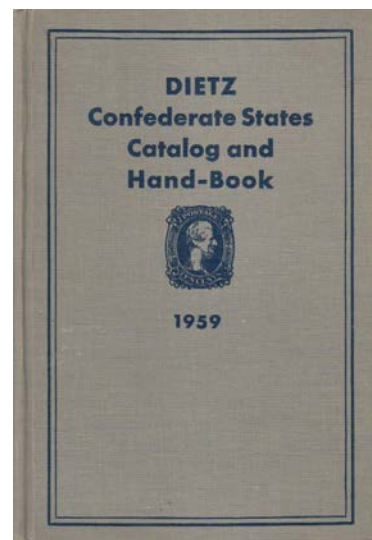
Block, Lawrence, **Hit Me: A Keller Novel**, Mulholland Books, New York, New York, 2013

Bradley, Alan, **Speaking From among the Bones: A Flavia de Luce Novel**, Delacorte Press, New York, 2013

**Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Hand-book**, 1959 ed., Dietz Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1959

Guertin, H. E., **The Wartime Mails & Stamps: Canada 1939-46**, Billig Publications, North Miami,

Lowe, James L., **Lincoln Postcard Collection: A Check List of Lincoln Postcards Old and New**, 1st Revision, Deltiologists of America, Folsom, Pennsylvania, 1973



Pelayger, Dr. Scott, **Mellone's Specialized Catalogue of First Day Ceremony Programs and Events**, FDC Publishing Co., 1989

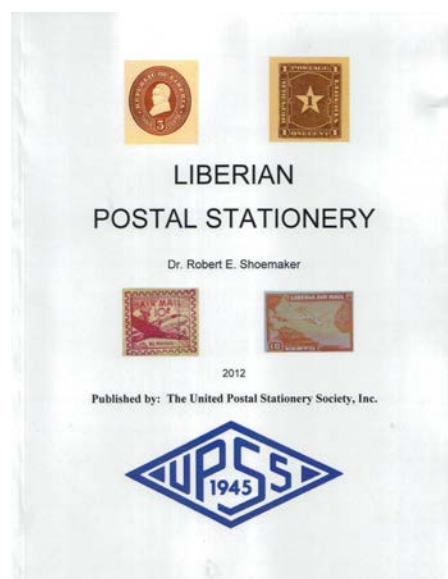
**Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue – 2014**, Scott Publishing, Co., Sidney, OH, 2014

Shoemaker, Dr. Robert E., **Liberian Postal Stationery**, The United Postal Stationery Society, Inc., Chester, Virginia, 2012

Small, Richard, **Postal Machine Cancel References**, 1984

Zumstein, **Schweiz/Liechtenstein**, Zumstein & Cie, Bern, Switzerland, 1993

Book Reports is published in a color electronic format, which is available online at [www.nwpl.org/newsletter](http://www.nwpl.org/newsletter) and can be sent to members by email. Please contact [nwpl@qwestoffice.net](mailto:nwpl@qwestoffice.net).



# Library Notes

Orlie Trier, NPL President

## Board elections

Tuesday evening, May 28, at the regular meeting of the Oregon Stamp Society, we will be electing members to the Northwest Philatelic Library. Up for re-election are incumbents, Orlie Trier for President, Jim Correy for Treasurer, Darlene Lengacher, member at large, and new to our board, Isaac Oelgart, also member at large. I want to thank our Board members for their willingness to serve and guide our Library to provide the best resources for your research and usage.

Rich Averill, due to personal illness, is unable to continue to serve on the library board. We thank him for his years of service and the wisdom he brought to the table. We miss him and we wish him well as he continues his physical challenges.

## Postal Bulletins, 1880-2012

This massive three-year project by one of our members has reached completion and is available online for users at [www.uspostalbulletins.com](http://www.uspostalbulletins.com). Under “frequently asked questions” you will find directions on how to use the site. For more complete information, check out Tony Wawrukiewicz’s article on page 24 of the April 8 issue of Linn’s Stamp News.

## In Appreciation

To the individuals listed below who have made recent donations of literature and other considerations to NPL, we thank you for your generosity. We want to assure you that we will make good use of these resources for our fellow philatelist and collectors.

Bill Seymour  
Neil Franke  
Carolyn Craig  
Ernesto Cuesta  
Carol Edholm

Michael Dixon  
Herman Axelrod  
Steve King  
Charles Neyhart  
Larry Weinstock

*THANK YOU all for your support!*

### Northwest Philatelic Library, Inc.

President – Orlie Trier, Secretary – Don Overstreet, Treasurer – Jim Correy, Directors: Greg Alexander, Rich Averill, Darlene Lengacher and Wayne Weatherl. Director of Sales – Larry Spray.

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On the web at:  
[www.nwpl.org](http://www.nwpl.org)

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