

Book Reports

Nov. – Dec. 2013 Volume 10, Issue 6



STAMPS DELIVER KNOWLEDGE

The Harp, from Cradle to Cloud

Tom Current

[Editor's Note: One of the NPL's founding members, Tom Current, passed on earlier this year. A generous bequest from his estate will continue to support the library into the future. Known for his philatelic expertise in British Commonwealth, Tom was also a harpist and an avid topical collector of harps on stamps. In his honor we are reprinting an article he wrote as part of our *Tips for Collectors* series.]

The harp is a musical instrument with --
(a) strings attached at an angle to a hollow sound chamber with openings,
(b) sound produced by vibrations of taut strings, and
(c) induced by plucking or pressing of fingers on the strings

Belize Sc 1020



Maya Musical Group with Pedal Harp

From the cradle of civilization in Sumeria and Mesopotamia, harps have produced beautiful sound for appreciative audiences. It is the instrument of heaven, but can be hell to play: cumbersome, finicky, expensive, difficult to learn, but worth it.

- I. Unframed Harp
- II. Lyre
- III. Framed Harp
- IV. Celtic Harp
- V. Pedal Harp
- VI. Non-Harp
- VII. Harpists



Ghana Sc 1040



Papua New Guinea Sc 747

References:

- Harp and Harpists*, Roslyn Rensch, 1989, Indiana University Press, 329pp
- Irish Life and Culture: XVI The Irish Harp*, Joan Rimmer, 1977, Cultural Relations Committee, The Mercier Press, Cork, Eire, 2nd Edn, 78pp
- The Revealer*, Journal of Eire Philatelic Association, Spring, 1994, "The Angelic Harp"
- The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Stanley Sadi, Edn.

I. Unframed Harp. The unframed harp has no forepillar to provide stability for consistent, clear tone.

Section A. Bow Style Harp

In Africa and a few other places, even today, and through early history, an arched stick and strings formed a simple bow harp. A hollowed stick, a gourd and other means, provided a sound chamber. The bow harp advanced as skill and materials permitted. The harp may have derived from the hunter's bow.

Many instruments that can qualify as harps were developed in Africa--such as the chordophones (Zimbabwe, SG 1219, 1987), Guashi harp of Southwest Africa, Longome harp of Rwanda, Adeudeu Harp of Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, or the Dozo N' Goni of Mali.

Section B. Angular Style Harp

Styles developed through antiquity. As more strings were added for broader musical sound, the weak and musically unstable bow harp was often replaced by angular construction. The Egyptians developed the angular style. The Sumerians used either bow-shaped or angular type harps. What distinguishes the angular style from later harps is that there is no forepillar, which leaves the instrument weaker than framed types. Central Africa Sc 120 (1970).



There are no surviving pictures of harps played by Jewish musicians but the 25a stamps, Israel Sc 103 (1955) is of a type used in the region, representing King David whom we know played the harp. Most of David's harps in artworks were figments of the artists' imaginations.



II. Lyre. The Lyre of the ancient Greeks and others in antiquity could have been called a harp, but a very limited one. With few strings and limited means of tightening strings (to change pitch), it should be considered more as a step in the development of the harp. The most popular lyre today is a symbol for all music, often fanciful in design, floating in air. Austria Sc 900 (1971) is a more realistic version of a playable lyre.

III. Framed Harp. Modern harps are almost always fully framed, made of wood or other firm material. Resulting musical tones are much superior to the bow or angular style.

Ethiopia Sc 459 (1966)
Bagana harp



Spain cancellation (1978)



Greece Sc 1109 (1974)
Harpist of Keros
c. 2800-1200 B.C.



IV. Celtic Harp. Celtic folk harp musical traditions migrated to the British and Irish islands from Europe over centuries and came to full flower in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Section A. Boru Harp. A "Brian Boru" harp on display at Trinity College in Dublin, Eire, is the oldest surviving such harp, dating to the 15th or 16th century. The Boru type harp is found on stamps of many countries, especially the coat-of-arms of the British Commonwealth.

Sc 578 (1983) Harpmaker
(Irish)



Latvian (German)
Sc 319 (1992)



French Semi-postal
Sc 142 (1958)



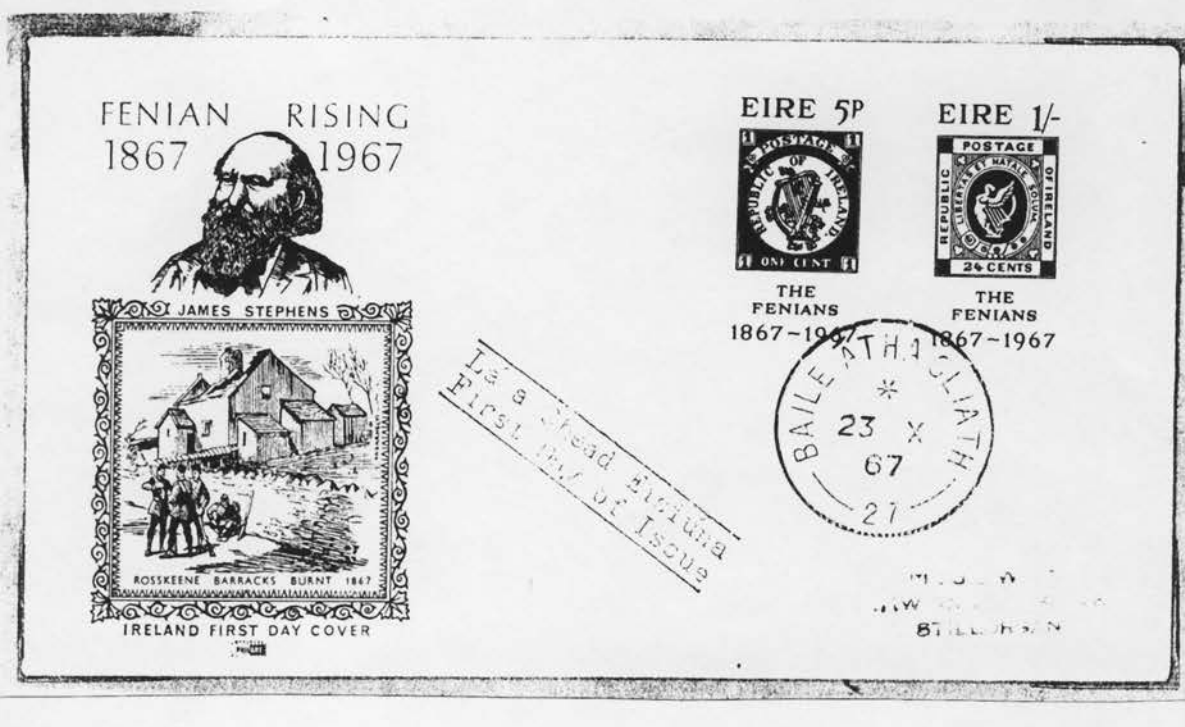
Eire (Ireland), Sc 170

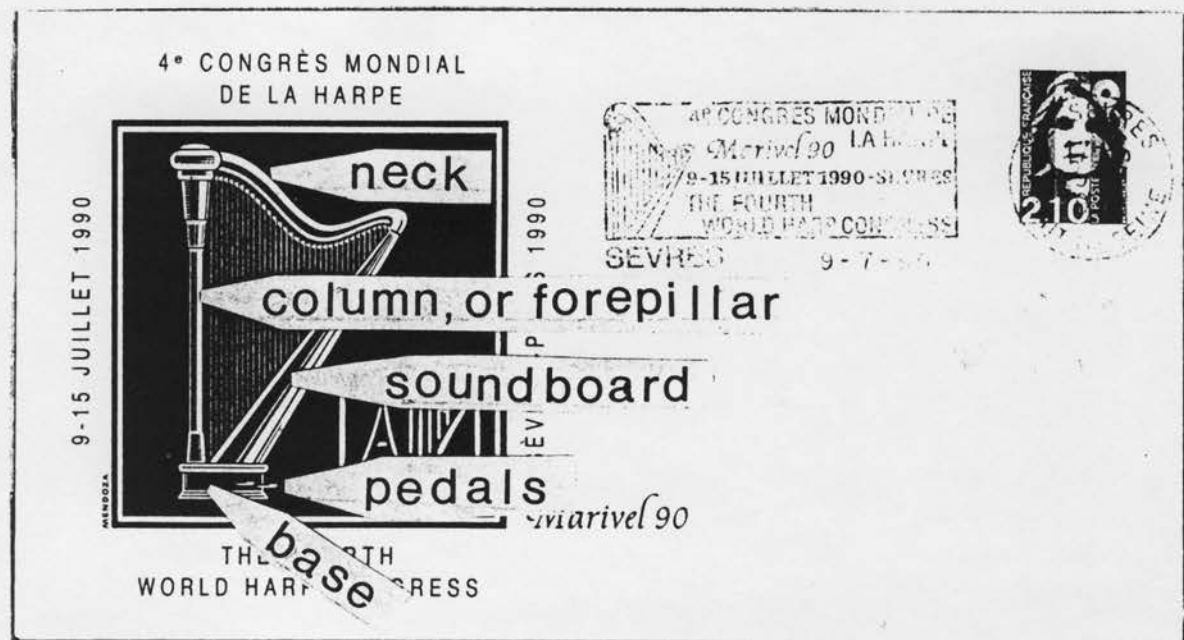
Section B. Angelic Harp. This is the other Major Irish harp style, based loosely on the Oliver Cromwell coat-of-arms. Letters in the 1800's were commonly folded. One of the postmarks was often called the "Mermaid" datestamp. The datestamp (JA 27, 1810 - opposite) replaced the strings area, with something like a female form on the perimeter. This type was used from 1808-1814.

Eire (Ireland), Sc 170
Oliver Cromwell
Coat-of-Arms



The 5p has a Brian Boru type harp; the 1/- is angelic.





V. Pedal Harp. The modern concert harp is a pedal harp. The pedals change the pitch (sharps, flats) more easily than the levers on folk harps. Often the pictures of harps on stamps do not show pedals--making it easier on the designer.

For the 4th World Harp Congress (1990), above, however, the pedals show very well. They are so small on the French stamp Sc 2169 (1992) and German stamp Sc B506 ("Muster" means "Specimen") as to be hard to see.



VI. Non-harps by our definition.

Jew's Harp



Autoharp



VI. Harpists. Madame Recamier,
harpist, courtesan, Sc 641 (1950)
and Paulina Liederbuch, Sc 213 (1994)



Empress Josephine played the harp and
Napoleon helped influence harp music.

Empress Josephine played the harp and
Napoleon helped influence harp music.
Sc 641 (1950)

Harpo Marx, Fredonia Marxonia Sta.



Benjamin Franklin played the harp.
Sc 2779 (1993)

001327



Julio Arboleda, Sc 754 (1966)

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Book Review: The American Philatelic Congress Books

Greg Alexander



Every year since 1935, the American Philatelic Congress has published what have become known as the “Congress Books” in conjunction with their annual conference. Each book is a collection of research papers on a wide range of topics, sometimes obscure, but always informative.

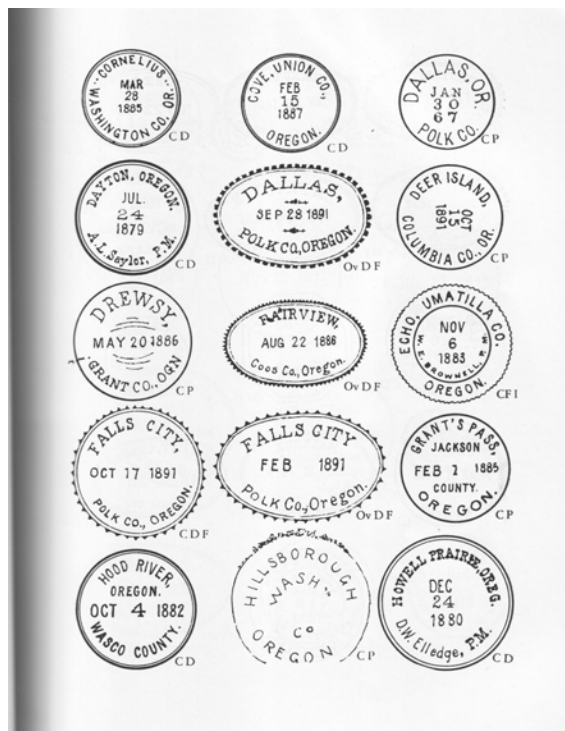
The library recently acquired a number of these books from the 1950s and stocks a complete run from the present through 1964. Nearly every country, state, and area of collecting is covered in some aspect by articles featured in the Congress Books.

Postal history buffs will find a great number of interesting stories, from “The Sinking of the Titanic and the Floating Safe: An Obscure Connection” (2005, book #71) to “History of the Postmarks Used in the Island of Crete

During the 1881-1884 Revolt” (1955, book #21). Articles are plentiful on airmail (“U.S. Autogiro Mail,” 2000), Civil War (“Black Jack and the Whales - Civil War Whaling Ship Marks,” 1960, book #26), topicals (“Meet the Tiger-Horse,” 1975, book #41), British Commonwealth (“First Colonial Printed Shilling Stamps of New Zealand,” 1971, book #37), Canada (“Early Posts of the Canadian Eastern Arctic Patrol,” 1968, book #34), revenues (“The Spud Tax,” 1999, book #65), and military (“Greek Occupation of North Epirus During WWII,” 1952, book #18). Northwest collectors can find several relevant stories, including “Check List of Known County Postmaster Handstamps of Oregon,” complete with illustrations (1950, book #16).

These pieces were written by many of the foremost philatelic researchers of their day. We encourage collectors to browse this series – you’ll find something that relates to your field of interest and probably a lot more.

[**Note:** The Northwest Philatelic Library is working to complete our collection of Congress books. If you have any of the following years you would like to contribute, we will gratefully acknowledge your gift in this newsletter. Needed years: 1935-46, 1948-49, 1951, and 1963.]



###

New on our Shelves

The following resources have been added to our collection:

Catalogs

Borek, **Ganzsachen-Special-Katalog Deutschland, ab 1933**, Braunschweig, 1976

Finland, **Postimerkkiluettelo NORMA Stamp-Catalogue 1983**, [Finnish and English]

Michel, **Ganzsachen-Katalog Deutschland, 1982**, Schwaneberger Verlag GMBH, Munchen

Pertile, Luigi, **Catalogo Generale Degli Interi Postali D'Italia E Paesi Dellarea Italiana, 1977**, Verona, 1977

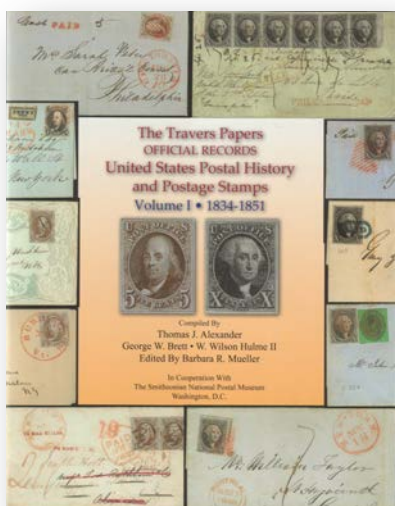
Pertile, Luigi, **Catalogo Generale Degli Interi Postali D'Italia E Paesi Dellarea Italiana, 1978**, Verona, 1978

Snee, Charles, **Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers, 2014**, Amos Press, Sidney, OH. 2013

Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps 2014, D. Robin Harris, editor, The Unitrade Press, Toronto, 2013



Books



Alexander, Thomas J., George W. Brett and W. Wilson Hulme II, **The Travers Papers: Official Records United States Postal History and Postage Stamps, 1834-1851, Vol. 1 & 2**, James E. Lee, Cary, IL, 2011

Congress Book 2013, 79th American Philatelic Congress, American Philatelic Society, 2013

DeVoss, Col. James T., **Via Panama**, Col. James T. DeVoss, State College, PA., 1978

Kravitz, Robert J., **A Collector's Guide to Postage and Fractional Currency**, 2nd ed., Coin and Currency Institute, Williston, Vermont, 2012

United States Official Postal Guides

Second Series

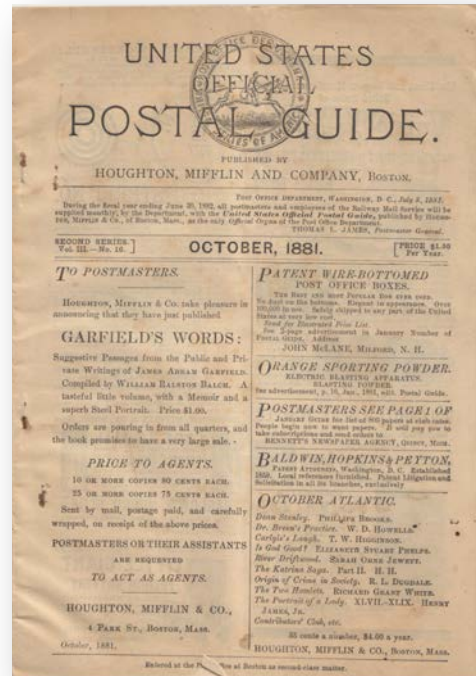
- Vol. 3, #10, October, 1881
- Vol. 8, #3-12, March to December, 1886
- Vol. 9, #4, 5, 10-12, April to May, October to December, 1887
- Vol. 10, #3, 9, March, September, 1888
- Vol. 12, #5-6, May to June, 1890
- Vol. 13, #9-12, September to December, 1891
- Vol. 14, #2-7, February to July, 1892
- Vol. 15, #12, December 1893
- Vol. 16, #3-6, 8-9, March to June, August to September, 1894
- Vol. 17, #7, July, 1895
- Vol. 18, #3, March, 1896

Third Series

- Vol. 2, #1, 5, August, November, 1909
- Vol. 2, #7, 8, 11, January, February, May, 1910
- Vol. 3, #2, 5, 6, August, November, December, 1910
- Vol. 3, #10-11, April to May 1911
- Vol. 4, #2-6, August to December, 1911
- Vol. 7, #7-12, January to June, 1915
- Vol. 8, #1-5, July to November, 1915
- Vol. 9, #8, February, 1917

First Series

- Vol. 3, First Edition, July, 1941, Part II



Happy Holidays from the Northwest Philatelic Library!



Library Notes

Orlie Trier, NPL President

E-books related to stamp collecting

William Sharpe wrote an article entitled “Several websites offer e-books related to stamp collecting” in the August 5 issue of *Linn’s Stamp News*. Interested collectors can begin with an Internet search using the terms “philatelic e-books” or “stamp collecting e-books.” One of the books available is *Stamp Collecting as a Pastime* by Edward J. Nankivell, which can be read online or downloaded. You can also go to the Project Gutenberg search page (www.gutenberg.org) and locate two books in English and nine in French. Other sources for e-books include www.philatelicsannex.org/reference/reference.html and Google Books.

Postal Bulletin project

NPL member Tony Wawrukiewicz has been busy. We recently noticed an item published in *Linn’s Stamps News* that notes, “After more than three years of concerted effort, all issues of the Postal Bulletin [1880-2012] of the United States now exist in a fully searchable online database.” (April 8, 2013, page 24). Thanks, Tony for making this resource more usable for all of us. And for bibliophiles who appreciate the paper versions, check out the early issues we just added to our collection (see “New on our Shelves”).

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.

Charles and Gloria Neyhart
Wm. Eugene Atkinson

Bill Seymour
Jack Hartong

Maureen Medes
Ronn Alexander

Steve Brandt
Albert Rouse

THANK YOU all for your support!

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