



# Book Reports

Sept. – Oct. 2013 Volume 10, Issue 5



## STAMPS DELIVER KNOWLEDGE

### A Small Piece of Pioneer Post Office

Charles Neyhart

Northwest Philatelic Library recently received an exceptional donation – an original brick from the Pioneer Post Office – donated by **Ed Kane**. I've known Ed as a renowned U.S. precancel collector and as a valuable research resource when it comes to Portland postal operations. Ed started a 38-year career in the Portland Post Office in 1946 working in distribution at the main office, then located in the Federal Building at 511 NW Broadway directly across from the current main office on Hoyt Street. He worked in various capacities in the Portland Post Office and retired as a postal systems examiner. The story of the brick and its continued importance cannot be separated from the history of the Portland Post Office or from Pioneer Post Office.

#### PIONEER POST OFFICE<sup>1</sup>

Pioneer Courthouse, as it is now officially known, was designed originally to accommodate all federal offices and functions in Portland. Portland Block 172 was acquired from the City for \$15,000 and \$395,000 was appropriated by the U.S. Congress to construct the building located on the full city block between Fifth and Sixth Avenues and Yamhill and Morrison Streets.

Construction commenced in 1869 and the building opened October 1, 1875. The post office was housed on the first floor, the Federal District Court on the second floor.<sup>2</sup>



Source: U. S. Post Office Department (circa 1885)

<sup>1</sup> The General Services Administration and the Pioneer Courthouse Historical Society have, through their websites, provided a rich and detailed history of the building. I have drawn from both of those sources in

<sup>2</sup> The first Portland postmaster was appointed November 8, 1849. Until 1875, the post office was located in a number of privately-owned buildings centered in the then small downtown core area by the Willamette.

Due to the public prominence of the post office, the building was popularly referred to as “Pioneer Post Office.”

The building is of Italianate design, rectangular, with three stories above a basement. Load bearing walls are made of brick masonry; the exterior is faced with smooth cut sandstone. The first floor interior has a main hall running north-south the walls of which are faced with plaster and dark stained wood with high polish. Doors and wicket-like windows (for postal customers but which were later moved) break the side elevations of this main hall and provide access to the rooms at the east and west sides of the floor.



The Pioneer Post Office brick imprinted “E J JEFFERY”  
above “1872”

Building materials were procured locally. The yard of Edward James Jeffery contracted to provide brick for the project. Jeffery had been an itinerant miner for many years before settling in Portland and engaging in the building trades. His yard was located at (NW) 19<sup>th</sup> and B (Burnside) Streets. He imprinted his bricks for this project with “EJ JEFFERY” above the year of firing. The donated brick is dated “1872.” Jeffery experienced continued success in his brick business and grew to include active engagement in city and railroad contracting.

### **BUILDING RENOVATIONS AND EFFECT ON THE POST OFFICE**

At the turn of the century, Pioneer Post Office was deemed too small for Portland. Thus, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$200,000 for a 1903-05 remodel and expansion. The first floor was expanded to the west and wings added at the second and third floors above that expansion on the north and south. The first floor addition almost doubled the available floor space for the post office. A large open post office workroom was built into the added space, which resulted in reconfiguring the post office lobby. The west side also became the main public entrance to the building. [Structural steel beams were introduced in this expansion, as was oil fired steam, electrical power and an elevator.]

The continuing growth of the city and a desire to achieve certain efficiencies in postal operations necessitated a 1918 move of the main post office to a new, much larger Federal

Post Office building at 511 NW Broadway across from the trains at Union Station. The former main post office at Pioneer then became a classified station and was renamed Central Station. In 1933, though, the Federal District Court and Central Station were both moved to a new Federal courthouse (later named the Gus Solomon Courthouse) at Main and Broadway. The old building was deemed obsolete and put up for sale – not for the last time. Due to public pressure, Pioneer Station, a new classified station was established in 1937 back at the old building and, even though it no longer housed the main post office, the building was officially named Pioneer Post Office with a plaque placed on the west exterior wall to commemorate the event.

A major interior refurbishing in 1973 was undertaken to prepare the building to house the Federal Court of Appeals of the Ninth District. This necessitated reducing Pioneer Station's footprint on the first floor. All existing post office doors and customer windows in the main hall were removed and replaced with paneling. A new east-west corridor and a new, but much smaller post office lobby were carved from the post office workroom originally created in the 1905 west side addition. This new post office lobby could be accessed by the public from the west (Sixth Avenue) side of the building. [At this point, the building was dedicated as Pioneer Courthouse and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977.]

It was during this 1973 work that a portion of an interior brick masonry wall in the old post office workroom was removed to create a new interior doorway into the new post office lobby.<sup>3</sup> Ed Kane, who was then working a service window at Pioneer Station, took it upon himself to “rescue” one of the bricks. He held on to it through thick and thin hoping to eventually find a good home for it. I asked Ed to donate the brick to Northwest Philatelic Library, believing that NPL would be an ideal place to showcase the brick – a tangible artifact of Portland postal history with a direct connection to an iconic Portland landmark.

## POSTSCRIPT

From 2002 until 2005, seismic and security upgrades were made to Pioneer Courthouse. One controversial result of this work was that it led to the permanent closing of Pioneer Station. The post office space was now needed to install a security vestibule on that side of the building.

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While there is no longer an active postal unit stationed at Pioneer Courthouse, some postal artifacts remain, including two large vaults that were originally part of the large post office workroom created in the 1905 expansion as well as the original post office service windows, which are now on the north wall of an historical display hall.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on Ed's description of the construction work and the brick's markings, the brick almost certainly came from the original 1875 west exterior wall of the building.

## Save the Date for SEAPEX 2013

The Northwest has had one outstanding philatelic exhibition for many years — PIPEX has been the mainstay of regional philately for over fifty years. A few years ago, Ruth Caswell of the Washington State Philatelic Society and the Puget Sound Collectors Club decided that another major show was needed and it should be based in Seattle. Through great effort on her part, Seattle Philatelic Exhibition (SEAPEX) was born and is now well recognized as advancing to be a major show in the Northwest.

Ruth retired at the end of 2012, staying on the SEAPEX show committee as an advisor and left the show in the capable hands of Anne Harris from the Inland Empire Philatelic Society in Spokane Washington.

In 2012 SEAPEX included 13 dealers and 38 major exhibits and was located at the Seattle Center. The venue was difficult to find, didn't offer much in the way of eating facilities in the immediate area. Access for dealers was far less than ideal and parking was expensive. The SEAPEX committee decided the show would not be held at the Seattle Center again.

SEAPEX 2013 will be held in Tukwila, WA on November 1-3 in the Tukwila Community Center, 12424 42nd Ave. S. This location is easily accessible from I-5 and has plenty of free parking. A map and driving directions are available at the SEAPEX web site, [www.seapexshow.org](http://www.seapexshow.org).



The SEAPEX 2013 show committee is in the process of lining up dealers and exhibitors for the show. The Northwest Philatelic Library is planning to have a table at the show and will offer a presentation for visitors Saturday morning. Organizers hope to have 20 dealers and 180 frames of exhibits. This will include at least 125 frames of competitive exhibits, with APS accredited judges. A prospectus and entry form for 2013 can also be found on the SEAPEX web site.

SEAPEX is a 501(c)3 organization and funding is exclusively by donation. Anyone wishing to contribute to the show may send a check to SEAPEX show, P.O. Box 20760, Seattle, WA 98102.

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## Good Turnout for NPL Birthday BBQ

Nearly three dozen members and visitors dropped by the clubhouse on Saturday, July 27 to enjoy burgers, hot dogs, cake and conversation at the barbecue celebrating the library's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. More than 10 former and current NPL board members were present, including the library's first treasurer, Wayne Holmes, and our first president, Charles Neyhart, who gave a short history of the NPL's formation. Current president Orlie Trier presented them both with plaques honoring their service (see Library Notes on page 10.)



## New on our Shelves

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

Auction catalogs with prices realized:

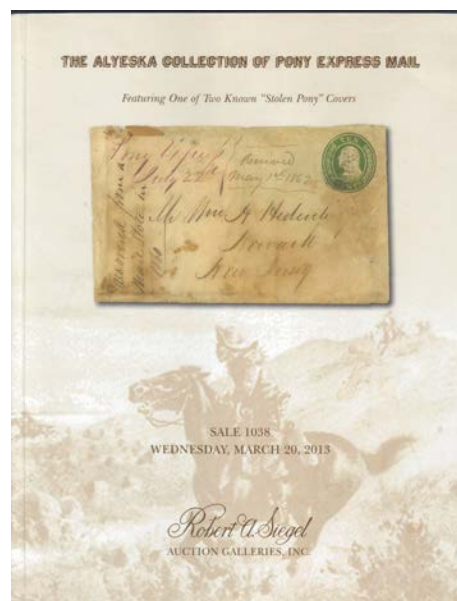
Firby, Charles G., **Rarities of Philatelic Literature**, December 2 & 3, 1997

Firby, Charles G., **Rarities of Philatelic Literature**, November 4, 2000

Greg Manning, **The United Nations Archives**, November 18-21, 2003

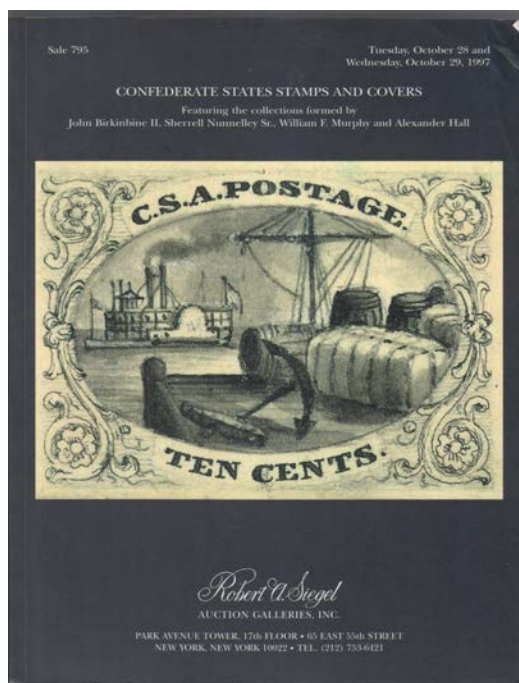
Shreve, Charles F., **William H. Gross Collection: United States 1847 and 1851-1856 Issues**, April 9, 2013

Siegel, Robert A., **The Alyeska Collection of Pony Express Mail**, March 20, 2013



Siegel, Robert A., **Confederate States Stamps and Covers**, October 28 & 29, 1997

Siegel, Robert A., **The D.K. Collection of Southern Postmasters' Provisionals of the American Civil War**, March 28, 2012



Siegel, Robert A., **The David Golden Collection of Hawaiian Stamps and Postal History**, May 24-26, 2011

Siegel, Robert A., **The Honolulu Advertiser Collection: The Stamps and Postal History of Hawaii, Part 1-3**, November 7-9, 1995

Siegel, Robert A., **The Jay Hoffman Collection of United States Stamps**, May 8-9 2008

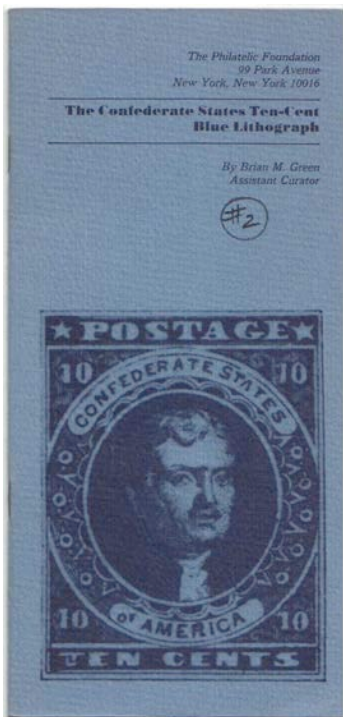
Siegel, Robert A., **The Scarsdale Collection, Part 9: Postal Stationery**, March 21, 2013

Siegel, Robert A., **The "Sirron" Collection of United States Perforation Rarities**, December 9, 2010

Siegel, Robert A., **The Steven C. Walske Collection of Special Mail Routes of the American Civil War**, May 27, 2010



Siegel, Robert A., **The Wagshal Collection of Classic United States Stamps: 1845-1869**, September 29, 2010



Siegel, Robert A., **The Wagshal Collection of Classic United States Stamps: One-Cent 1857-61 Perforated**, March 2-3, 2011

### Books

Baldus, Wolfgang, **The Postage stamps of the Principality of Atlantis**, Wolfgangbaldus, Munich, 2012

Facit, **Facit 2003 Special: Scandinavia**, Facit Forlags AB, 2003

Facit, **Facit Norden, 1981**, Frimarkshuset AB, Stockholm, 1981

Facit, **Ortstempelkatalog: Postal History 1982**, Frimarkshuset AB, Stockholm, 1982

Green, Brian M., **The Confederate States Ten-Cent Blue Lithograph**, The Philatelic Foundation, 1977

Hodson, **Hodson's Postal History Thematic Catalogue**, ATA Handbook, #18, American Topical Association

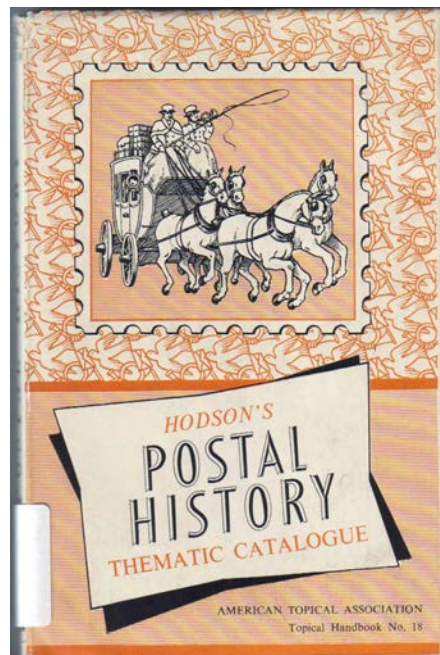
Mommsen, Durward, **The Black Jack in Vermont**, LaPosta Monograph Series, Vol. 7, LaPosta, LaPosta Publications, Lake Oswego, OR, 1991

Sanabria's **Air Post Catalogue, 1959-1960**, Nicolas Sanabria, Co., New York, 1959

Snee, Charles, **Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, 2014, Vol. 5**, Scott Publishing, Sidney, 2013

Undersander, Dan, Ed., **Stamped Envelope and Wrapper Specimens of the United States**, United Postal Stationery Society, Chester, VA, 2013

Van Wely, F., **English-Dutch, Dutch-English Dictionary**, Cassell & Company, London, 1960



Wooley, Mary E., **The Early History of the Colonial Post-Office**, Reprinted by Philatelic Literature Review, 1969

Yvert, **Catalogue Timbres de Monaco**, Yvert & Tellier, 1995

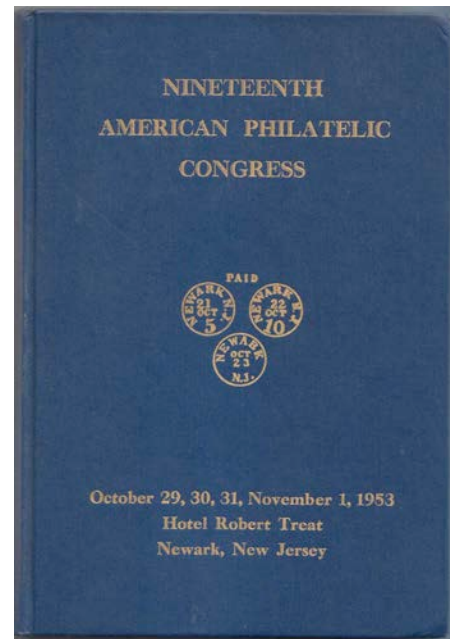
Zumstein, **Spezialkatalog Über Briefmarken der Schweiz**, Zumstein & Cie., Bern, 1992

**Philatelic Congress Books: 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1960, 1961, 1966**

#### Periodicals

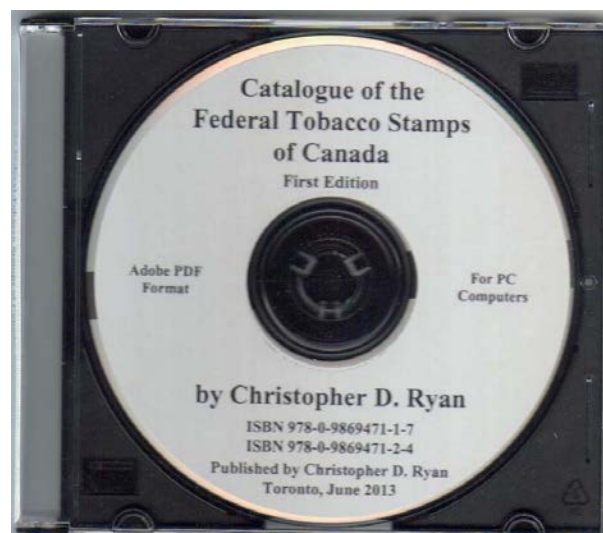
"Confederate Philatelist," Vol. 13, #7, January-April 1969

"Precancel Forum," Vol. 63, November 2002; Vol. 65, October – December 2004; Vol. 66 January, February, and December 2005



#### CD/DVD

Ryan, Christopher D., **Catalogue of the Federal Tobacco Stamps of Canada**, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., Adobe PDF Format, Christopher D. Ryan, June 2013





## September 2013

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 OSS Board Mtg 7 p.m.	10 OSS Mtg. 8 p.m. Library opens at 6:30	11	12	13	14 Rose City Stamp Fair 10-4 Library 10-2
15	16	17	18	19 NPL Board Mtg 7 p.m.	20	21
22	23	24 OSS Mtg. 8 p.m. Library opens at 6:30	25	26	27	28 Collector's Corner 10-4
29	30					

## October 2013

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 OSS Board Mtg 7 p.m.	8 OSS Mtg. 8 p.m. Library opens at 6:30	9	10	11	12 Rose City Stamp Fair 10-4 Lib. 10-2
13	14	15	16	17 NPL Board Mtg 7 p.m.	18	19
20	21	22 OSS Mtg. 8 p.m. Library opens at 6:30	23	24	25	26 Collector's Corner 10-4 Lib. 10-2
27	28	29	30	31		

## Library Notes

Orlie Trier, NPL President

### Anniversary Celebration a Success

Thanks to all for a great celebration, especially fellow board members who barbecued, helped serve, set up and cleaned up. The weather was great and about 35 were served. The highlight of our celebration was surprising Charles Neyhart and Wayne Holmes with a special recognition and plaques (now placed in the library) honoring their vision of what the library could become and their years of service.

Charles' plaque reads: "Led the move to make the NPL an independent non-profit. His vision as president guided the board during its first nine years."



Wayne's plaque reads: "First treasurer of NPL whose firm fiscal oversight gave the library a solid foundation and the resources to achieve its goals."

## 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.

Ed Kane   Charles Neyhart   Brian Birch   Gary Wright   Ed Owen

*THANK YOU all for your support!*

### Northwest Philatelic Library, Inc.

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

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[www.nwpl.org](http://www.nwpl.org)

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