

Hinges & Tongs



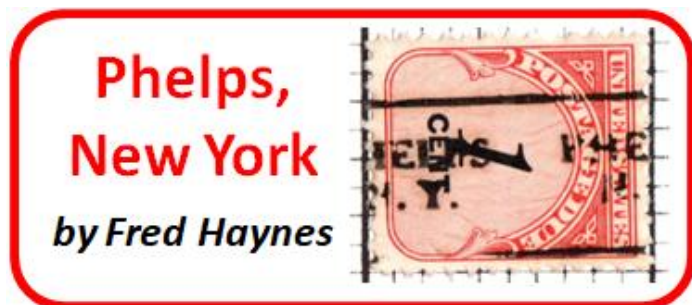
In this Issue:

Winter 2023

Phelps, New York • A Million Dollar Winner?
RPA Meetings and Club News • Editor's Note
Prisoners of War Exhibit • Philatelic Gem
2024 Forever Stamps and New Postal Rate

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Editor: Fred Haynes (fredmhaynes55@gmail.com)

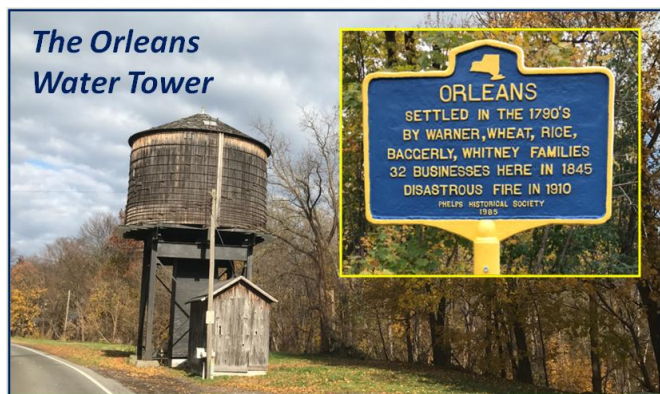
The Rochester Philatelic Association, PO Box 10206 Brighton Station, Rochester, NY 14610 <http://www.rpastamps.org>



Phelps is a small town located about 30 miles southeast of Rochester along State Route 96 in Ontario County just south of the New York Thruway. With a population of only 1800 in 2021, the small rural farming town may be best known for its annual Sauerkraut Festival the first week of August.

Given its size it is not surprising that RPA member Charlie Adrion informed me that precancel stamps from Phelps are not common. The one shown in the title box from his collection is planted sideways on the stamp and is off center by about as much as is possible, but it is most definitely a prize possession for a precancel collector.

The 23-mile long Ontario Pathways Trail runs east from Canandaigua to Stanley New York and then follows the abandoned Penn Central railroad line north through the village of Orleans towards Newark. It is on this north-south leg of the trail that it passes through Phelps along Flint Creek.



Club members may recall this summer that RPA Lifetime member Joe Doles offered his meter stamp collection to anyone who would pick it up at his house. If no one wanted it, Joe was going to throw it in his garbage. Never one to over look something new to learn (as well as an opportunity to search for a philatelic holy grail), I volunteered to accept Joe's offer. So one fine summer day, I hopped over to Joe's house to pick up 35 boxes of meter cancel stamps, cancelled postal cards and stamped covers. Each box held about 700 size ten envelopes. A few boxes contained newspapers, clippings and other non-stamp items. The total collection of cancelled items contained 20,000+ items.

The collection was divided roughly in thirds between meter cancels with slogans, cancelled postal cards and regular cancelled stamp covers with slogans. What first caught my attention were the slogans of the fifties: advertisements for the Fred Allen, Milton Beryl, I Love Lucy shows and many more television productions.

Tom Fortunato put me touch with a fantastic meter cancel internet site, everything a meter collector would like to know, beginning with the 19th century preproduction meter machines, through the 1920's first production machines to today's meter machines. Together with my 20,000+ new friends and my new knowledge, I spent a good deal of time this summer looking at meter numbers and type cancels plus slogan cancels

I promised Joe that if I found a million dollar winner, I would share the sales with him. So far, I have found

continued on page 4 (see Phelps, NY)

Continued on page 6 (see Million Dollar Winner)

Editor's Note

Once again, RPA club members have come through with interesting content to assist me in putting together a complete issue. Thank you Rich, Larry, John, Charlie, and Tom for sending me useful input, and to Paul Brach for wandering about with me identifying fungi.

Who wants to help with the next issue? As winter sets in for earnest and you are inside with your stamps think about putting together a short note for the next Hinges and Tongs. I will be starting to think about the issue in early February and would love to hear from you.

Fred Haynes

RPA Meeting News



Unity-Village Community Center in Greece

The Unity Village Community Center is at 1477 Long Pond Road in Greece. Buy/sell/trade runs from 7:00-7:30 PM, followed by the formal meeting at 7:30 PM. A silent auction concludes most evening's program.

Here's our schedule through June, 2024r. You will notice that the March and April meeting lack programs. Let us know if you would like to volunteer for one of those presentation dates.

2023

Dec.21.. Glorious Flight: The Jeannette C. Rudy Duck Stamp Collection: a YouTube video from the Smithsonian National Philatelic Collection
(Note: a week later than usual)

2024

Jan. 11. Korean War POW Mail **with John Hotchner See more detail on page 3**
Jan. 25.....Everyone a Dealer Night (Member Buy, Sell, Trade) **No Zoom Meeting**
Feb. 8.... Linn's 2023 U.S. Stamp Popularity Poll
Feb. 22. Fun with Abbott Labs Dear Doctor Postcards
March 14.. TBA

Mar 28..... TBA
Apr 11..... TBA
Apr 25..... TBA
May 9..... 1935 King George V Windsor Castle Omnibus Issue
May 23.. Railroad Destination Cancellations **with Robert Lighthouse**
June 13.. 1924 Paris Olympics- Milo of Croton: From Design to Use
June 27..... TBA

If you can't attend a meeting in person, join us via a Zoom connection using the following link and login details at 7:30 PM each meeting night, except for Everyone a Dealer night in January

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/7117955142?pwd=amR3Z1Z3L0d4bkJaNHdJUjBmbjFaQT09>,

Upcoming RPA Election

As of this writing in early December, we have an uncontested slate of officer candidates for the 2024-2025 two year term.

President - Jack Rosenstein
Vice President - Larry Rausch
Treasurer – Larry Rausch
Officer at Large - Tom Fortunato

Additional candidates are welcome to announce their candidacy during the December 21 meeting. Should no other volunteers come forward, our Bylaws allow those present to vote and approve the slate above on behalf of the entire membership.

2024 Membership is due by January 15th

We're back on a membership calendar year so it's that time again! Dues remain at \$20 and help defray our club expenses that are at an all-time low. Payment is accepted only by check or money order made out to "Rochester Philatelic Association." Bring yours to the next RPA meeting or mail them to: RPA Membership, 28 Amberwood Place, Rochester, NY 14626-4166. Should you no longer be able to remain a member, send a note to that address to let us know. Attention Life members- your dues are already paid!

Mail to and from American Prisoners of War, During and After the Korean War

by John Hotchner
RPA Program, January 11, 2024

Objective: This three-frame exhibit shows examples of the very limited number of surviving covers to and from American POWs to show (a) how POW mail was handled by captors and by the UN command during the war, (b) the POW repatriation process, and (c) mail of POWs who remained in China involuntarily after formal repatriation in Operations Little Switch and Big Switch, and the POWs who chose to remain; the "Turncoats".

Historical Context: The Korean War began at 4am on June 25, 1950, when the North Korean Peoples' Army (NKPA) crossed the 38th parallel dividing the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) from the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the South. It overwhelmed the weak ROK Army resistance. U.S. Army troops arrived on June 29, under the flag of the United Nations which had voted to oppose the NKPA invasion. They were not combat ready and were largely ineffective.

In July, the NKPA drove the ROKA and USA into a small area around the port of Pusan on the east coast of the ROK. In this campaign about a third of the 7140 acknowledged American POWs were captured. 40% of captured POWs died on forced marches, from disease, frigid weather, or executions in the six permanent camps opened in 1951-52 to house POWs, or in transit to them. These six camps were in the far north along a 50 mile stretch south of the Yalu River; the Chinese border. Note red box on the map. There is not one instance of successful escape.

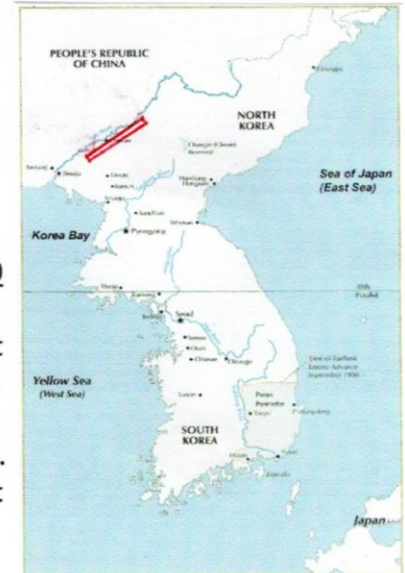
Marines arrived in Pusan in July, 1950. Others invaded at the west coast port of Inchon on Sept. 15. This and the break-out from the Pusan perimeter, both aided by combat personnel of 20 other nations, drove NKPA out of ROK by late September. The UN continued into the North toward the Yalu River. Alarmed, the Chinese entered the war in late November with overwhelming troop strength; pushing UN troops back into the ROK. By Spring of 1951, the Chinese took over most POW camps to exploit the propaganda value of POWs.

What followed was a two year see-saw "police action" which ended with the Armistice of July 27, 1953, that re-established the 38th parallel as the dividing line between North and South. It provided for exchange of POWs; establishing the Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee, under India's leadership.

Scarcity of Material: Fewer than 125 POW covers are thought to have survived. The exhibitor's records over 20 years of study catalog 68 covers; of which over 40 are shown here. Why so few? Though POWs were encouraged to write home, not a single letter made it out until early 1951; and after that, most were purposely destroyed before mailing. POWs in work details gathering wood near camps reported after the war seeing the routine burning of piles of letters outside the camps. Only a tiny percentage were sent. Likewise, few incoming letters were delivered to POWs. Fewer still survived as no personal property was permitted.

Exhibit Organization: Part I: Routing of mail; types and markings
Part II: Mail from permanent camps 1-6; shown in order of opening
Part III: A case study: 1st Lt. Charles Rundgren
Part IV: Incoming mail returned to sender as undeliverable, or received by POWs
Part V: Operations Little Switch and Big Switch
Part VI: Neutral Nations [POW] Repatriation Committee
Part VII: Mail from POWs remaining in China involuntarily years after repatriation
Part VIII: Mail from/to turncoats

Especially significant covers are highlighted using salmon mats.



The red box marks the location of permanent POW camps in the DPRK

Phelps, NY (continued from page 1)

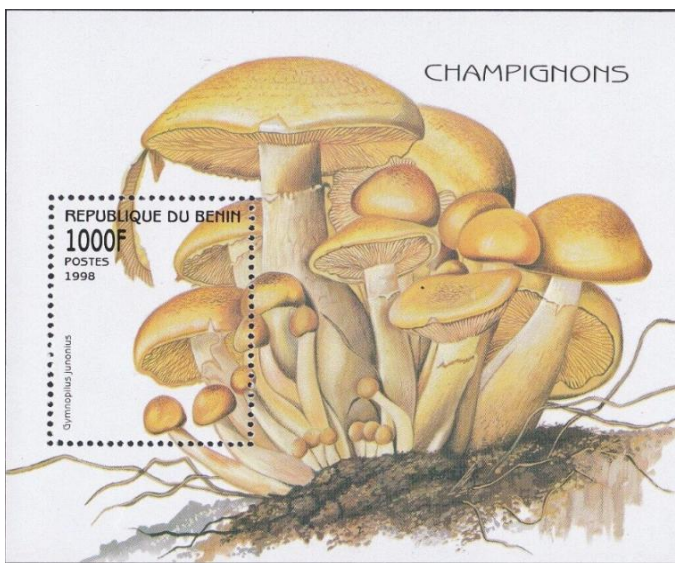
A water tower, erected in the village of Orleans (now part of Phelps) was constructed in 1872 to service steam engines that ran along the tracks. The wooden water tower (see picture on page 1) was purchased by the town in 1975 and is still used today. Water from multiple springs flows naturally to the tower where it is still captured and can be used by area residents free of charge.

Nearly 60 years ago, on May 14, 1964, a tragic head-on train collision occurred on the rail line in Phelps. One engineer and two brakemen perished. Debris from the accident is scattered on the forest floor along Flint Creek. The tragic event is memorialized along the Ontario Pathways Trail. In 2014 Boy Scout Ben Walker built a 0.4 mile loop trail that descends from the old railroad line to Flint Creek which he named the Train Wreck Loop Trail.

Paul Brach and I walked that trail in November. We inspected several pieces of wreckage strewn about along the trail as we sought out interesting plants and fungi to identify and photograph.



As a large, colorful mushroom with hallucinogenic properties it is not surprising that big laughing gyms have been featured on stamps by a number of countries. My favorite is probably this 1998 souvenir sheet from the Republic of Benin.



But these two from Guinee (1999) and Azerbaijan (1995) are nice also. Note the characteristic orange ring near the top of the stem in both our field picture and the stamps.



A memorial to those who perished in the 1964 accident and the author standing over a piece of wreckage that has been incorporated into a living tree.

We did find another philatelic topical to add to our growing collection of mushrooms on stamps that we have seen. In the moist woods along the creek we found several clusters of big laughing gym mushrooms (*Gymnopilus junonius* group). These large orange-yellow mushrooms get their common name from the fact that they contain kava kava like molecules that ease inhibitions to the point of inebriation. Paul and I did not attempt to find out if this is true. But we did take a picture!



Philatelic Gem on Ebay



by Larry
Rausch

The variety of United States postal history items on Ebay is truly amazing. One day last month a U.S. cover search produced 300,000 results. This cover with a receiving postmark of Central Bridge, NY proves to be the **Best of the Best**. You might ask why? As most club members know, I collect Wheel of Fortune cancellations and [authored a book on that subject](#). I maintain a database of all covers identified with the Wheel of Fortune Cancellation. This database now contains 2,850 covers from 1,144 different towns.

The cover shown has a received postmark from Central Bridge, NY. The postmark is not from a rare town as I have identified 15 copies from 1882 to 1886. This, however, is the earliest Wheel of Fortune cancellation for Central Bridge (February 9, 1882). But what makes the cover the **Best of the Best** is the quality of its postmark. The cover was obviously cancelled early in the life of the handstamp as very little ink has accumulated into the die and the circles are nearly perfect. This cancellation is the best of these 2,850 covers for a purchase price of \$6.50.

Central Bridge is a hamlet within the town of Schoharie and Esperance in Schoharie County, New York. The town was established on April 27, 1836 with Olaf Williams as the first Postmaster serving thru May 1849. His yearly postal compensation doubled from \$12.45 to \$24.07 during his term. A Central Bridge famous son is



George Westinghouse, born in 1846. He would become one of the greatest engineers and inventors of his time, having been issued 361 patents and founding 60 companies, including Westinghouse Electric. As of the 2010 census Central Bridge's population was 593.



The first Forever stamp that will cost you 68 cents (see page 6) will be issued on January 25th and will celebrate the Year of the Dragon.

A week later, on January 31st, the 47th stamp in the Black Heritage series will honor Constance Baker Motley (1921-2005), the first African American woman to argue a case before the United States Supreme Court and the first to serve as a federal judge.



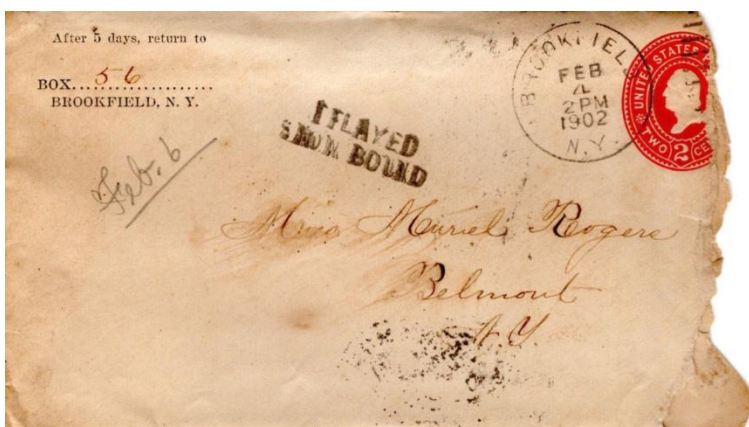
Million Dollar Winner (continued from page 1)

two items of interest. A very early Pitney Bowes meter cancel from machine #7 (1924) with a city cancel of Jersey City, NJ, and a meter cancel (#60215, 1937) from a machine for which there are only eight known images. Mine is one of only two with the city cancel of South Plainfield, NJ. Sorry, no sales yet, Joe!



I am searching for a meter cancel from December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day, which was, unfortunately a Sunday; or a "war" slogan posted closest to December 7, 1941 to better the only cancel I previously owned. I would also love to find a meter and slogan from September 17, 1942, my birth date. No luck yet, but a lot of material to search.

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Tom Fortunato stumbled on this interesting postal marking online. Have you ever seen this postal marking: **DELAYED SNOW BOUND**. It must have snowed the first week of February in New York in 1902 delaying delivery of this letter sent from Brookfield in central New York to Belmont in the southern tier. There must have been snow on Interstate 86!

Remember these stamps?



On September 9, 2009, the USPS issued a horizontal strip of four stamps commemorating a typical Thanksgiving parade. Paul Rogers generated a computer-based design from mid-20th century poster art. USPS policy restricting the promotion of commercial businesses precluded that the design of the stamps include any reference to the Macy's parade.

Another interesting note is the postal rate of 44 cents in 2009. In the 14 years since 2009 the postal rate for a first class letter has increased 50% to 66 cents. For comparison, a gallon of gas cost \$2.61 in September of 2009. So far in 2023, the nationwide average is \$3.58. That is an increase of 37%. Just facts!

But wait, in two months: the postal rate will increase again. On January 21, 2024, a Forever stamp for domestic use will increase two cents to 68 cents. There will no change in the additional ounce rate, which will stay at 24 cents.

The rate to mail a first class letter will not be the only rate increase in January. The retail price for a variety of popular shipping options will surge by 5-6% if approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission.



The design of these two new stamps featuring stellar formations will not change, but the denominations when they are released will be \$9.85 and \$30.45, aligned with the new rates for Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express.