



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

The Origin of Postage Stamps

by Paul Brach



In the mid-1830's, the recipient of a letter, not the sender, paid the postage; and the recipient could refuse to accept delivery if they wished. The postman would then take the letter back to the post office and put it in a pile of hundreds of similar "dead" letters taking up space in every English post office. Sooner (or later!) the post office would return that letter to the sender, free of charge. It was apparent that every dead letter sent through the British mail system was delivered twice; first to the recipient who refused it, and then back to the sender; even though no postage was collected from either the sender or the recipient.

The cost of delivering, storing, and returning these letters was passed on to paying customers in the form of higher postal rates. The system was fraught with abuse. It was common for people to hide some kind of secret coded message on the outside of the envelope, which the recipient could read without having to pay postage on the letter.

In 1837, Rowland Hill, an educator by profession, conducted a study of the British postal system and published his findings in a pamphlet entitled "Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practicability." He noted the obvious problems with the practice of having the recipient pay the postage and criticized the practice of calculating postage by mileage. He noted that when



Rowland Hill

Newest RPA Members

The Rochester Philatelic Association has welcomed three new members in the first four months of 2025. Tom Fortunato asked each of them if they would provide a short note about themselves and their philatelic interests. All three have done so. We gladly welcome Jan Conte, Warren Lamboy, and Paul Wagner.

Jan Conte

I have lived in Rochester all of my life with the exception of four years in Newtown PA, where my husband was born and raised. I grew up in the 19th ward near Genesee Street. My husband John Kelly and I reside in Penfield with our dog and cat. We have adopted many rescues over the years. They have taught us how to love unconditionally and to stay present. My husband owns a marketing and website development company and is an avid disc golfer and disc golf teacher.



Jan Conte

I have spent most of my professional career in banking and in the debt collection industry. I owned a collection agency for 20 years. I currently work for Five Star Bank in the Recovery Department as a Consumer Loan Workout Specialist, where I work on estate matters and legal referrals and I negotiate settlements. I also work a part-time job at an assisted living facility in Webster on Sundays.

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President's Message

Summer is approaching and this is when I spend less time with stamps and more time outdoors - if this rain ever stops.

In conjunction with Tom Fortunato's talk on the Boston 2026 International Stamp Show at our recent meeting, it is not too soon to start planning your visit. I would like to share with you my thought processes of two aspects of planning your trip: method of travel and accommodations.

For travel, the two best options are by car and by plane. If you plan to do other things outside of Boston, a car would be the best option. Be aware that parking in the Seaport District where the show is being held will be \$50/day. If you travel by plane, there is a free bus from Logan Airport to the World Trade Center station near the convention center. (You pay to go to the airport though.)

Finding accommodations will be tricky. The hotels near the convention center have almost all been completely booked by show officials, judges, dealers, and postal administrations. If you search online for 'Revere Beach Subway Station and then for hotels, you will find a few nearby. Revere is just one subway stop away from Logan, and then you can take the bus to the station near the convention center. Make your reservation for a longer period than you think you will need because you can always make a long reservation shorter, but you may not be able to make a short reservation longer. Finally, make a reservation you can cancel without penalty because you can not foresee any emergency in advance.

The photo is a newborn fawn in my neighbor's yard.



Cheers, Jack Rosenstein

For more on Boston 2026 Stamp show see pg. 6

We meet at the Unity Village Community Center, 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.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- just two left before summer

Thursday, Jun 12..... India Philately Part 1
by K.K. Rajamani

Thursday, Jun 26..... India Philately Part 2
by K.K. Rajamani

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.

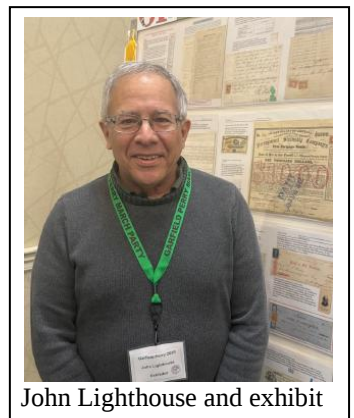
<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/7117955142?pwd=amR3ZlZ3L0d4bkJaNHdJUjBmbjFaQT09>



Rich Spinelli (right) presents at our spacious meeting location on April 10th in Greece. Tom Fortunato (front left) runs the Zoom connection.

RPA Member Exhibit Award

We congratulate RPA member **John Lighthouse** for winning the Civil War Philatelic Society Trophy at the March Party show in Cleveland. The award is presented to the CWPS member exhibiting the best and most comprehensive collection of Civil War stamps and/or covers at the exhibition. John's multi-frame exhibit was entitled "Using the Documents of Commerce to Fund the Civil War 1862-1872." John also received the APS Medal of Excellence for Pre-1900 Material at the show in Cleveland.



John Lighthouse and exhibit

New RPA Members (continued from page 1)

received my BA in Religious Studies at Nazareth College (now University), graduating summa cum laude. My hobbies and interests include reading, writing, exercise, gardening, playing the piano, feeding the outdoor critters, hanging with our dog and cat, and breaking bread with my family and friends as much as possible. I consider myself a "master baker" of anything vegan and gluten-free.

I had an aunt and uncle who collected stamps and coins. I was always very intrigued with the process and recently decided to start my own stamp and postcard collection. So far, my collection reflects my interest in politics and civil rights. My first purchase for my collection was a series of John Lewis stamps. I am looking forward to learning from the group.

Warren Lamboy

I am excited to be a new member of the Rochester Philatelic Association. I reside in Geneva, NY, and I am 72 years old, although I feel like I am 35. It would take me about 65 minutes to drive to the Thursday meetings, so I may have to attend mostly by Zoom. I have been a stamp collector for about 20 years after receiving a little inheritance from my mother's passing. My collection comprises primarily 3 parts.



Warren Lamboy

Old German States — For these, I use the Michel Spezial 2024 Catalog, and I collect all the primary catalog numbers as well as the secondary types, colors, most paper types, and perforations. I have virtually complete collections from Baden, Bavaria (until Mi: 36), Bergedorf, Braunschweig, Hamburg, Hannover, Lübeck, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, Prussia, and Saxony (except Mi: 1b, Mi: 1c, and Mi: 18c). I have a trivial number of items from Bremen, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg, and Württemberg.

Small collections of special interest to me — I collect the first few issues from a country or a set that I might find interesting, such as Austria Lombardy-Venetia - Bosnia-Herzegovina (a Minkus album bought sight-unseen at auction and

containing about 50 % -75 % of all the issues to 1940); Czechoslovakia (complete imperforate Hradčany Palace); all 3 colors of both the Great Britain Penny Black and the blue 2 D as well as Mulready 1D and 2 D envelopes and letter sheets; first five issues from Lithuania; all 10 unused "Niema's Vergessen" Austrian stamps from the Anti-Fascist Exhibition in Vienna 1946; 20 stamps from Prussia from 1866 done by a special printing process on "Paper Resembling Goldbeaters Skin"; French Navigation and Commerce Series — complete issues from 31 of the French Colonies; Saar "Landschaftsbilder" (landscape pictures) (I), (II), (III), and (IV) sets complete, including a 5 Franc inverted overprint on an original 25 Marks, catalog Mi: 83 K, which the Michel catalog declares "No pricing possible"; and a dozen or so other small collections of interest.

Worldwide collection (excluding the above), in 3 old Scott International Albums with a large number of stamps from many countries and most issued before 1900.

I am living on limited means now, so my collecting activity has diminished greatly. Nevertheless, I would very much like to participate in RPA. One area where I may be able to help other collectors is due to my obsession with correctly identifying difficult issues, especially those from Europe before 1900.

Paul Wagner

I am a 71-year-old retiree and I live in State College, Pennsylvania. My career was in medical imaging, primarily ultrasound, for which I trained at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia in the late 70s. During the last 20 years of my working life, I developed and ran a training program for ultrasound technologists at a small, privately owned business and technical school in State College.



Paul Wagner

My father-in-law, Larry Harris, was a member of your club for many years. He raised his family in Brighton and also had a summer cottage on Canandaigua Lake, which my wife still owns with

her sister. So we get to the Rochester area several times throughout the year. Perhaps one day I may be able to visit your meeting in person.

My interest in stamps developed when my two boys were young. We enrolled them in a youth stamp club offered at the American Philatelic Society headquarters in Bellefonte. We are fortunate to live so close to this facility, and our local stamp club meets there. In the last year, I got the urge to pick up the hobby again, so I joined our local club, the Mount Nittany Philatelic Society.

Stamps are not my only hobby. I am actively involved in our local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, in which I sing and occasionally direct. I also do photography (I collect old cameras), woodworking (I collect and use antique woodworking tools), and local history, and I play drums in the "Little German Band".

Five years ago, my wife Leslie and I acquired a 28' camping trailer, in which we travel with our Labrador retriever, Cinnamon. Last Fall we made a 7-week trip to the Southwest.

Editor's Note: I found it interesting to learn about our newest members as I put this issue together. I wonder if there are other recent new members or even "old-timers" who might enjoy putting together similar short notes about their lives (in and out of the philately). Perhaps we can reserve space in future issues for you.

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On March 27, 2025, the USPS issued a Forever stamp commemorating the life and legacy of actor, TV personality, and animal advocate Betty White, whose television appearances spanned the history of the medium while delighting generations of fans. Interestingly, this stamp has a local link to Rochester.

Of the thousands (perhaps millions) of photographs of Betty White the USPS could have selected for this honor, they chose a photo taken by Rochester Institute of Technology graduate Kwaku Alston. The photo was originally taken in 2010 for her book entitled *"If You Ask Me (And of Course You Won't.)"* Alston claims it is the energy in white's eyes that sets this portrait apart, leading the stamp's designer, Dale Stephanos to select his image.



Photo of Kwaku Alston from the Spring 2025 Alumni magazine of RIT. The text on the photo reads "Kwaku Alston said RIT gave him access to the "best photo community in the world." He met many of his best friends and collaborators at the university.

Kwaku Alston grew up in West Philadelphia where his father was a postal worker, but he has fond memories of his time as a student in Rochester. Kwahu claims that it was during his sophomore year at RIT that he became truly inspired and thought he could pursue his dream as a portrait photographer. After his time as a student at RIT (class of 1994), Kwaku went on to New York City for several years before heading west to become a renowned Los Angeles based photographer, specializing in celebrity, editorial and advertising portraits.

In May of last year, Kwaku was acknowledged as the RIT's Outstanding Alumnus for 2024-2025, an award established in 1952. The Institute calls this the highest honor they can bestow upon a graduate.

Editor's Note: Thank you, RPA member Kelly Armstrong for bringing this Rochester connection to our attention. Kelly is also a graduate of RIT, and as a graduate of its Ringling School of Art, Kelly receives the alumni publications where he noted Kwahu's award and link to the recent United States postal issue.

Origin of Stamps (continued from page 1)

all the problems were taken into consideration, the average cost of delivering a letter was one and one-half pennies. He proposed lowering the postage rate to one penny per letter, regardless of how far the letter had to travel to get to its destination. Moreover, he proposed that the sender pay for the postage in advance, so that the Post Office wouldn't waste time or money delivering letters that no one wanted to pay for. With payment required in advance, people couldn't cheat the system.

But how would the Post Office know for sure whether postage for a particular letter had been paid in advance or not? Hill proposed that the Post Office mark each letter using a special rubber stamp to indicate that the postage had been paid. He also proposed that the Post Office sell pre-stamped envelopes. For those who preferred to use their own stationery, Hill proposed that the Post Office sell "a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp", complete with gum on the reverse side, that when moistened, would allow the piece of paper to stick to the envelope. He didn't realize it at the time, but with his "bits of paper," as he called them, he had just invented the world's first adhesive postage stamp.

England's House of Commons was intrigued. Two years later, the government adopted his proposals and on January 10, 1840, "universal penny postage" came to be. The advantages of Hill's system were obvious, and other countries adopted it. In 1845, the United States reformed its postal system and by 1870, more than 30 countries around the world adopted Hill's system. It was just a matter of time until the rest of the world did likewise.



According to a 2024 Smithsonian Magazine article the first known piece of mail with a prepaid adhesive stamp (the so-called Penny Black) likely fetched as much as 2.5 million dollars at an early 2024 auction. It is dated May 2, 1840.

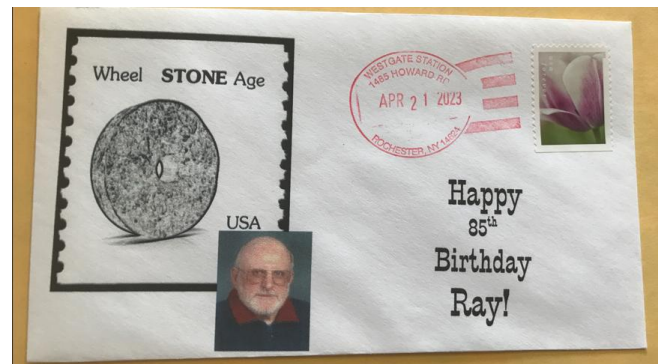
A memorial Lunch for Ray Stone



On April 14th, more than a dozen of Ray Stone's philatelic friends met at the Morningstar Restaurant in Rochester to remember our friend and colleague at one of his favorite lunch spots. Many present used to share lunch there each and every Tuesday.

Photo by Fred Haynes

Ray's sister Ruth is standing and speaking to the group in the above photo. Her husband and former RPA Treasurer, Dave Robinson, is to her immediate right. Ada Prill (seated on Ruth's left) brought along this cacheted cover she presented Ray at his 85th birthday two years ago.



Art Cover Exchange (ACE) member Charlie Delgado included Ray in this memorial cover and posted it to the ACE Facebook page.

Full Obituary for Ray in [Spring 2025 H&T issue](#)

War of 1812 Postage Surcharge by Larry Rausch



The Federal stamp act of December 23, 1814 increased the postal rate by 50% effective February 1, 1815 and was repealed on March 31, 1816. This act was enacted to offset the cost of the War of 1812 against Great Britain.

An interesting fact is that the day the increase was applied is the same day a peace agreement was signed. Because this rate only applied for a period of 14 months the postal covers are scarce but not rare. The chart below shows the postal rates of the Act of 1814. During this time of US Postal history the postage amount was determined by the distance from the sending post office to the receiving office.

POSTAGE RATES	
Not Exceeding 40 Miles	12 Cents
Over 40 But Not Exceeding 90 Miles	15 Cents
Over 90 But Not Exceeding 150 Miles	18 ¾ Cents
Over 150 But Not Exceeding 300 Miles	25 ½ Cents
Over 300 But Not Exceeding 500 Miles	30 Cents
Over 500 Miles	37 ½ Cents



The cover's very unusual cancellation mark below allows the Post Master to enter the postage amount in manuscript. The amount of 25½ cents was charged for a destination greater than 150 miles but less than 300.

Boston 2026 Stamp Design



The following is from the USPS webpage on new issues

"For one week in May, 2026, the world capital of stamp collecting will be Boston, host of the Boston 2026 World Expo, the 12th international philatelic exhibition of the United States. To build anticipation and commemorate this confluence of art, history, and international goodwill, two intaglio-printed stamps will highlight the special role of Boston in the American Revolution as we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary.

Gregg Breeding, an art director for USPS, designed these stamps with digital illustrations by Dan Gretta featuring the Old North Church and a "midnight rider" on horseback in Colonial garb."



Did you get your Goodnight Moon Forever stamps? The stamp was issued on May 2nd, 2025 in Kansas City, MO.