

Hinges & Tongs



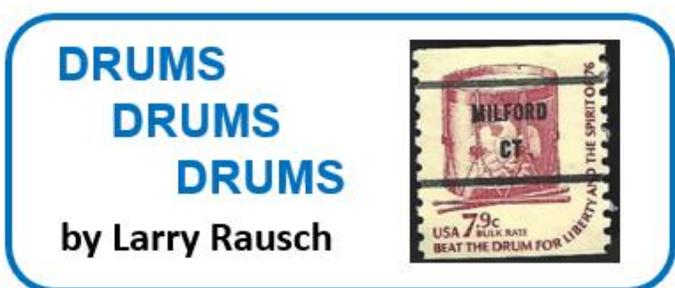
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Spring, 2026

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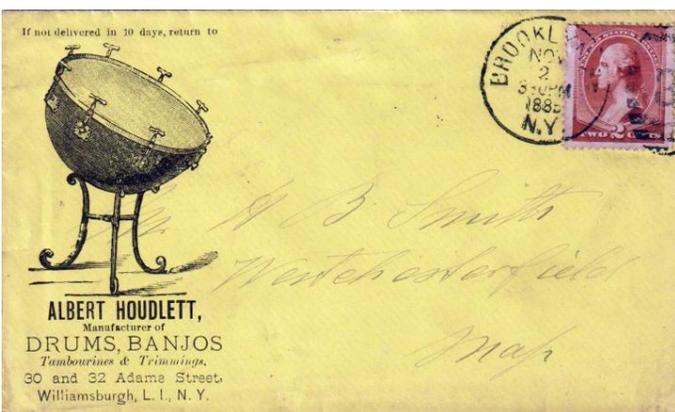
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Part of the bygone era of Brass Bands and Big Orchestras was drum production and sales. These highly decorated four postal covers featuring drums were each mailed with a Scott# 210 two-cent stamp featuring our first President. The First Day of Issue was October 1, 1883, and the stamp remained in postal usage throughout 1888. The four companies issuing these covers were all located in Brooklyn, NY, within a few miles of each other.

The first cover from Albert Houdlett & Son (later Albert Houdlett & Sons) was in business by 1885 (the date of this cover). The firm was known for making drums, banjos, and mandolins.



Next is an 1887 cover from George Velsor's Sons, who was a drum and musical instrument manufacturer based in Brooklyn, New York. Velsor's Sons operated during a period when the area was a hub for instrument manufacturing. The company's products are now considered antique collectibles.



continued on page 3 (see Drums, Drums, Drums)

From the Editor

I am in my 13th year editing Hinges and Tongs (that is over 50 issues!). I have enjoyed producing RPA's quarterly newsletter, compiling what is sent to me, both in terms of philatelic articles and club news. But finding the energy and motivation this past year or so has been hard for me, and I think it's prudent to plant the seed that the RPA may need a new editor sooner rather than later. **So, I ask, is there anyone out there who wants a new challenge and might wish to take on this task?** It is work, but it is also rewarding when the job is done.

I have not been terribly active with this wonderful hobby of late, and as many of you know, I have not been attending meetings regularly. All of this takes me away from the pulse of the club and makes it hard to produce a quality newsletter. I thank Larry Rausch and Rich Spinelli for contributing articles for this issue and Tom Fortunato for updating the website to allow me to include an up-to-date calendar. Even with that, this issue is only five pages in length. For the time that I continue as editor, I will need contributions from members.

Fred Haynes

UPCOMING RPA MEETINGS

Help! As you can see below, we lack programs for any of our upcoming spring meetings. We need members to step forward with programs to fill the seven scheduled meetings before the summer.

We will spend time at our remaining March meeting to ask for ideas. We will also have our standard silent auction; perhaps this is a meeting to bring a few extra items to place on the auction table.

Thursday, March 26	TBA
Thursday, April 9	TBA
Thursday, April 23	TBA
Thursday, May 7	TBA
Thursday, May 21	TBA
Thursday, June 11	TBA
Thursday, June 25	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.

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

2026-2027 RPA Officers

President – Jack Rosenstein

Vice President – Larry Rausch

Director-At-Large – Charlie Adrion

Appointed Treasurer – Larry Rausch

By Fred Haynes

One of the earliest mushrooms to appear in our area in late winter or early spring is the brilliantly colored scarlet cup (*Sarcoscypha coccinea*). I saw and photographed one in mid-March during a hike at Zurich Bog.



I knew I had seen a similar image of a scarlet cup on a fallen log on a postage stamp in my collection. In 1976, Tristan da Cunha issued this stamp of a pair growing on a log. And just like the pair at Zurich, there was a third smaller one in the background!



If you use Priority Mail or Priority Mail Express to send flat-rate mail smaller than 12.5" by 9.5", you may know that the rates for those two services are \$11.75 and \$33.25, respectively.

Perhaps you have also seen the new "Cosmic Wonder" Stamps issued on February 24th. Hopefully, your mail will not get lost in space with these stamps,

Drums, Drums, Drums (continued from page 1)

The third cover was mailed by H Lawrence and Son in the mid 1880's. The company specialized in producing high-quality drums and percussion instruments. The firm contributed to the local music scene by supplying instruments to schools and musicians. The firm was known for its craftsmanship and innovative designs in drum manufacturing.



The last cover is from S. Wells and Son, dated 1887, also a Brooklyn, NY company. Wells and Son is known for manufacturing drums noted for their brass.



What a delight to see such decorated large Banknote printed stamp covers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: One of the American Topical Society's (ATA) 1500 thematic stamp lists that members can purchase is entitled "**Musical Instruments – Drums**". That checklist contains 918 stamps, including the 1976 United States pre-canceled bulk rate stamp pictured in the title box of this article on page 1.

**Oconee, Illinois
Fancy Cancel
By Larry Rausch**



The village of Oconee, Illinois, is located slightly Southeast of the center of Illinois in Shelby County. It has always been a small village, incorporated in 1872, with a 1880 population of 259. Today, there are only 141 residents. The town was named after the daughter of a local native American chieftain.

The first time I saw this cancellation was in the book "Cancellation and Killers of the Banknote Era" by James Cole. My search for a cover with this cancellation began. After several months, I found and purchased my first cover with a Scott #213 two-cent green stamp, but only a partial fancy star cancel. I continued looking for a full cancellation. Finally, I found a beautiful cover with a Scott #210 two-cent red-brown stamp.



These two covers are included in the Bank Note Era, which includes the stamps from 1870 to 1894. During this time, US postage stamps were printed by three different companies: first, the National Bank Note Company, next, the Continental Bank Note Company, and lastly, the American Bank Note Company, which printed these two stamps. Starting in 1894, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, DC, began producing US stamps.

Stamps of the (Pontifical) Roman State – Part 1 - 1852

by Rich Spinelli

How many of you have heard the following about collecting stamps of the Roman State? "BE CAREFUL. THERE ARE SO MANY FAKES AND FORGERIES THAT YOU MAY GET BURNED. AND, THEY ARE SO EXPENSIVE". Hum! There's a challenge I decided to look into.

First, a little history. The Pontifical State once comprised 16,000 square miles of central Italy over which the Pope had ruled as a temporal sovereign for more than a millennium. The region was bounded on the north by the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venice and the Duchy of Modena, on the west by the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and on the southeast by the Kingdom of Naples. The population was just over three million.



The philatelic period of Pontifical Roman State history (1852-1870) is a time of great historical interest because it coincides with the struggle for

unity in the Italian peninsula. During this period, the reigning Pontiff was Pius IX (crowned 21 June 1846). Three years into his reign, Italian nationalist ferment led to public disorder in Rome and the declaration of a 'Roman Republic' under Mazzini and Garibaldi.

In 1859, the northern section of the Pontifical State, Romagna, declared its independence. Shortly afterward, the central portion, the Marches and Umbria, also broke away. This left only the portion surrounding Rome until that region fell to Sardinian troops on 20 September 1870. This event, which Italian nationalists regarded as a liberation, was in fact an invasion and a conquest. Pope Pius declared himself 'the prisoner of the Vatican' and sequestered himself in the Lateran Palace to protest the loss of his realm by force of arms, creating a seemingly irreconcilable dispute with the Italian government known as the Roman Question. 1870 is considered the consolidation of "Italy".

1852 ISSUE: These political events are reflected in the postage stamps of the country. Three Issues of Roman State stamps were issued: 1852 imperforate, 1867 imperforate, and 1868 perforate. It is my intent to eventually understand all the Roman State stamps, but this report will focus on the 1852 issue.

On 21 November 1851, Cardinal Secretary of State Giacomo Antonelli announced the introduction of bolli franchi (postage stamps) in the Pontifical (Roman) State. Various regulations concerning rates and usage were published, and the accepted design showed the chiavi decussate (crossed keys of St. Peter) surmounted by the triregno (triple tiara), which had for centuries been the official coat of arms of the popes.

Eleven different value postage stamps were issued in 1852 (*see image on next page*). Each value has a different border and bears the inscription "FRANCO BOLLO/POSTALE" and the value in bajocchi (100 baj. to the scudo). The eight values from ½ to 7 bajocchi were issued on 1 January 1852, printed in black on colored paper. Three higher values were added later in the same year: the 8 baj. black on white paper (October 1), the 50 baj. blue on white paper; and the 1 scudo carmine rose on white paper (both July 12). All stamps are imperforate. An image of each 1852 stamp is shown at the top of the next page, along with a Scott Catalog value for unused and used stamps.

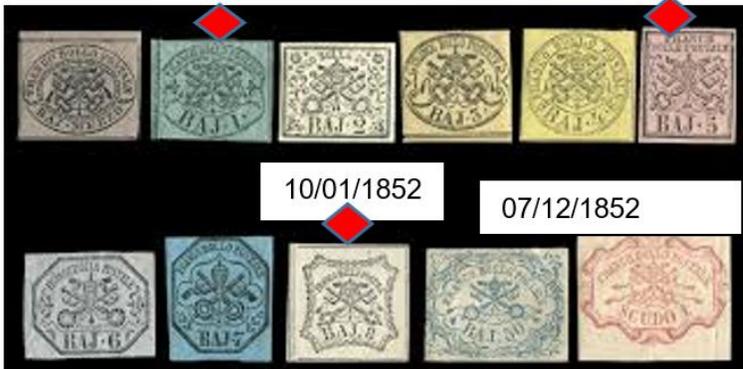
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½ baj.	1 baj.	2 baj.	3 baj.	4 baj.	5 baj.
\$57	\$290	\$14	\$175	\$250	\$250
\$125	\$11	\$72	\$65	\$85	\$16

2011 Scott Catalogue Unused
2011 Scott Catalogue Used

1855: 2 forgeries

1855: 3 forgeries



1855 Bologna Lithographed Forgeries are limited and expensive.

20th Century Anti forgery approaches:

Water-marked paper

Greasy Ink

Grilled paper

Forgery limitations: Ink color, ink blobs

1855: 2 forgeries

6 baj.	7 baj.	8 baj.	50 baj.	1 Scudo
\$1000	\$1425	\$650	\$16,000	\$4000
\$85	\$80	\$47	\$1800	\$3600

2011 Scott Catalogue Unused
2011 Scott Catalogue Used

½ baj.	1 baj.	2 baj.	3 baj.	4 baj.	5 baj.
\$57	\$290	\$14	\$175	\$250	\$250
\$125	\$11	\$72	\$65	\$85	\$16

2011 Scott Catalogue Unused
2011 Scott Catalogue Used

Authorities soon discovered various fraudulent practices. First, cancellations were washed off so that the stamp could be reused. Then in 1855, the 1, 5, and 8 baj. values of the 1852 issues were forged at Bologna by lithography. There are a limited number of these, and they are rarer and more expensive than the original issues.

To further combat forgery practices, watermarked paper was employed in 1856 for the 50 baj. and the 1 scudo, white paper was used for the three highest values, and a special, greasy gray ink that allowed for the detection of washing. These stamps are highly prized, especially in mint condition. The introduction of a grill cancellation also made the removal of postmarks difficult.

Early twentieth-century philatelic forgeries are more common than mid-nineteenth-century ones. Francois Fournier produced many of these in typography. Most commonly encountered are the 8 baj., 50 baj., and 1 scudo. The 8 baj. forgery is a dark olive color, unlike any genuine color, and often surrounded by an uninterrupted frame line. It is well drawn. One also must be careful of mint copies of the 7 baj., with or without gum. The Fournier forgery of this value is well drawn but has a telltale blob of ink at the left end of the horizontal line of the 7. Some of the 50 baj. and 1 scudo Fourniers are excellent and knowledgeable collectors recommend that they should be expertised.

My collection contains one or more examples of each of the eleven 1852 issues as well as examples of each of the 1867 (seven stamps) and 1868 (seven stamps) issues. I am currently in the process of characterizing the 1852s using information available from the internet. When I complete that, I will address the 1867's and 1868's. Any reader knowledgeable in Roman State stamps, who would like to see my originals or assist me with assessment is welcome to contact me.

*With the assistance of a report by Rev. Father Floyd A. Jenkins, SJ.