

SOSSI JOURNAL

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SCOUTS ON STAMPS SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

The Diversity of Scout Philatelics





Celebrate the Diversity of Scout Philatelics

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One of the questions I'm most frequently asked by our members is, "What is Scout Stamp collecting and what is and isn't Scout Philately?" This question becomes increasingly more difficult to answer as I see our hobby diversify with each passing year. My insights into what we collect have developed from many sources; more often than not, contributors to the *Journal* and letters from our readership asking for articles about their areas of interest. The best resource was speaking to other stamp collectors and exhibitors associated with Scout related philately.

The hard and fast rules of Scout collecting that were true when the Society was founded are no longer the doctrine of serious collectors. Debate over the hobby's parameters has gone on for decades. It is not my intention to define the state of Scouts on Stamps collecting today, nor will I attempt to predict the collecting trends of the next few years. Rather, I intend to celebrate the diversity of the hobby and inspire you to become excited about collecting again.

Purists will insist that serious collecting involves stamps with a Scouting theme. Many dismiss cachets, seals, meters, and the like as not being philatelic enough for their collections. Other collectors revel in postal history, while still others seek out cancels, meters, and camp related items. Who of us could argue that there isn't room enough in the hobby for collectors of every niche in Scout philately?

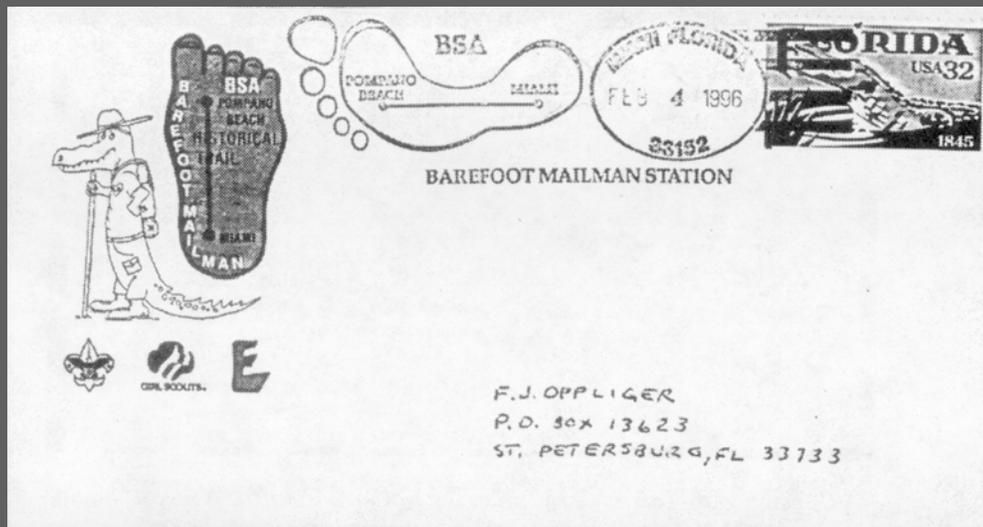
The only hard and fast rule which applies to the hobby is you must collect what you enjoy. Postal history buffs enjoy the story behind the cover as much as the cover itself. Who of us couldn't admire the discipline of collecting the classics? We must be mindful that each of us collects for his/her own reasons, and that though our niches may vary, together we are all Scouts on Stamps collectors.

It seems the largest groups of the Scout on Stamps collectors are those who collect single copies of the stamps and souvenir sheets. These include stamps honoring or depicting Scouts, Scouting events in either pictures or text or people related to the Scouting Movement. The nations of the world have made sure that these Scout collectors have will have plenty to collect with what seems to be a never ending supply of new issues with many different formats for these issues.

A collector could just collect the perforate variety of the stamps without the imperforate types, souvenir sheets and all the rest



A postal receipt validated with the special Scout cancel from the 1932 National Scout Camp in the Netherlands. An interesting example of philatelic peripherals



An excellent example of a cover that is neither rare nor expensive, but one I expect holds a special place in Mr. Oppliger's collection.

Not every piece needs to be expensive to be a vital part of your collection!

of the specialty items. If you're overwhelmed by the volume of material out there, you could limit your collection by setting a date that you start and/or end with. Another method is to collect a single country or group of countries with all the different items issued. Collecting events like World Jamborees could be a most interesting specialized collection to work on. Building a topical collection within our Scouting topical (campfires, Baden-Powell, bugling, animals, etc.) would make a great and interesting endeavor to assemble. A highly specialized collecting area is the collecting of stamp errors. This is a highly interesting area, and could develop into a very expensive as well as a most challenging area of collecting.

Another very popular area of collecting is covers. Most collectors accumulate First Day of Issue covers along with their stamps. Defining your collection could be accomplished by setting limits on the type of cover you collect. In this niche of the hobby, you could collect Scout related cancels without Scout stamps. There are also varieties known on many of the cancellations. A very fine set of catalogues is produced by the Germany Scouts on Stamps Society that shows most of the known Scout Cancels. One could collect cancels that have stamps associated with them only. You could specialize in Scout cancels not on stamps or covers, but on receipts, and other periphery. Another cover collecting segment is the world of cachets with Scout themes. They are very widely collected in the United States with a published catalogue (hopefully a new one will be coming soon).

A hybrid of covers and stamps is postal stationery items. This is a very limited area but a very expensive area. The early pieces from 1918 Scout Postal Card from Czechoslovakia and the overprinted postal cards from Siam in 1920 and 1921 are very rare and seldom seen, mint and very more so used. Other stationery items are more in line the with the budget of most collectors. They are fun to collect and a bit more challenging to find for most dealers do not inventory them.

The envelopes with the permit and meter impressions on them are a newer segment of our hobby that could be collected either on cover or as a piece. There are hundred of different slogans that have Scouting as a theme



A Cuban Scout 'Corner Card' from the National Council. A nice example of the type, interesting and inexpensive as well!

on them from both within the Scouting organizations and from business and industries that have supported Scouting throughout the years. These come from all over the nations of the world where the Scouting is present. Many of them difficult to find for most are on ordinary business type mail that collectors do not see and are thrown away. The Journal now has a monthly column devoted on this under studied area of collecting. This could be a real hunt for the elusive and yet not expensive items to collect in most cases.

There are other covers related area that you might consider collecting. The corner cards (name and addresses) from different councils would make an interesting collection. Some have had events associated with them over the years like Jamborees, camporees, and national campaigns like "Get Out and Vote". I have to be careful not to get too interested myself. This could really be fun to collect.

There are even areas that are not truly philatelic but ever so closely related to it. Though not purely philatelic, they certainly deserve to be mentioned here. These areas can provide the same challenges and enjoyment as other segments of the hobby. Collecting Scout seals and labels is a truly international endeavor. The variety and theme depicted on them are almost endless. The production of these labels range from very simple with single color printing to highly complex printing in a rainbow of colors. Our expert on seals has an ongoing column in the Journal that covers this field of collecting and its many aspects. He is always glad to hear from people interested in writing to him.

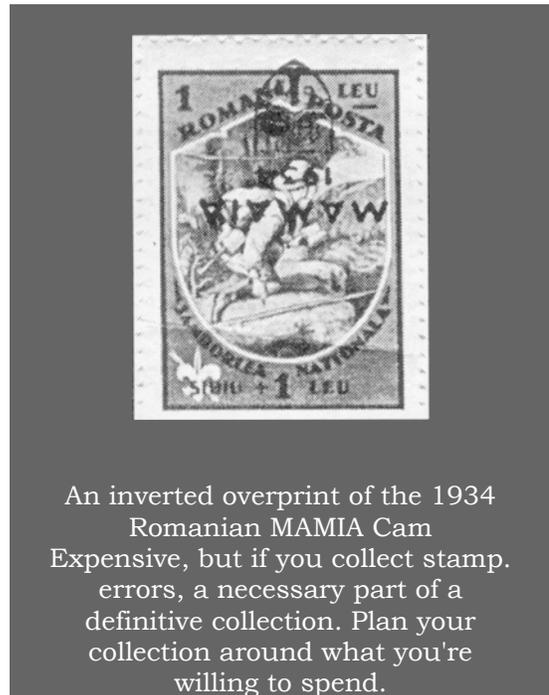
Let's even consider Picture Postcards. Here again, most are not philatelic in nature, but many have been used through the mail, making for often interesting usage. The collecting of Scout Picture Postcards is very popular in Europe. Many cards bringing a very good price. They are interesting for their often unique views into the past for us to enjoy today. They often remind us of the ideals and thinking of Scouting in the founders' time.



An example of an advertising slogan cancel used in the Philippines immediately prior to World War 2. Could the sender have imagined the events of the next year that would change the world forever?

One of the most rewarding ways to enjoy the hobby is to share and exhibit your collection. Exhibiting need not be a competitive or expensive endeavor. Simply sharing your collection with others at both Scouting and community events will almost always allow you to appreciate and become excited about your collection. Even the competitive exhibit is an outlet for you to appreciate and develop your collection. As an exhibitor myself, I can attest to the excitement and satisfaction this area can bring to the hobby. You make a great many new friends though the practice of exhibiting, and can learn a great deal about your area of interest as well as the hobby itself.

Don't give up on your Scouts on Stamps collection; take the time to rethink just how you collect. You may find that if your set up parameters to your collection, it will be more enjoyable and less taxing on your pocketbook. Remember, you are in charge of the direction and development of your collection. Use the Journal, the Society, the stamp dealers and the hobby magazines as guides to your collecting. Decide to make the hobby enjoyable and challenging rather than heart breaking or laborious. Enjoy our hobby for all it's worth.



An inverted overprint of the 1934 Romanian MAMIA Cam Expensive, but if you collect stamp errors, a necessary part of a definitive collection. Plan your collection around what you're willing to spend.



A 1950 US National Jamboree First Day Cover canceled at both the 1950 and 1957 National Jamborees. A cover with a unique history that could be added to any collection for less than the price of two first run movie tickets. A great item for a collector expanding his/her collection, or a young collector starting out in the hobby