

HANDBOOK SERIES NO. 26

HOW TO SUBMIT
REPAIR
DAMAGED STAMPS
ALSO NOTES ON
WATERMARK
REVEALER

And Other Philatelic Matters

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HOW TO SCIENTIFICALLY
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R E V E A L E R
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HOW TO SCIENTIFICALLY REPAIR DAMAGED STAMPS



HERE is a marked difference between a damaged stamp scientifically mended and one which has been repaired by some novice in a careless manner. The former may be worth nearly its catalogue value. The latter, originally in the same mutilated condition, may still be worthless. There are several expert repairers in this country who can take a stamp in very bad condition and so skilfully repair it that it will pass for a perfect specimen. In Europe the art has even surpassed that of this country. A rare Hawaiian 13c stamp carefully pieced together by a European stamp doctor sold shortly for \$1000. Collectors can add to the attractiveness of their collections by following the directions given below.

Cut-round envelopes can be mounted on square pieces of paper of the same color by cutting a hole in the paper of nearly the

size of the stamp to be mounted, then scraping the edges on the back of the stamp to the thinness of tissue paper, and gluing the stamp over the hole cut in the square piece of paper. When dry, the stamp should be placed face-up on a stone, or other hard surface, and with the handle of a knife or of a pair of shears the edges of the stamp pressed firmly into the paper on which the stamp is mounted. This pressing should be done after the mending of every stamp, whether envelope or adhesive.

Pieces of perforation taken from sheets of unused stamps or from torn Continentals should be kept to mend stamps with which have lost a part of their perforation. Liquid glue is better than mucilage and a waterproof cement can be bought which will enable the mended stamp to be soaked without coming apart.

Almost every common stamp which is imperfect should be kept to furnish "patches" for valuable stamps with pieces missing. These patches must be of the same shade and color of the stamp

to be repaired, so you cannot save too many.

Then a bit of cancellation over a mended stamp which shows where it has been repaired, often covers up the conspicuous spot. A drop of writing ink put on and then blotted off will sometimes suffice. Five cent's worth of printer's ink will cancel a thousand stamps, but it must be used sparingly. When mixed with glycerine it makes an ideal cancelling ink, such as used in the post office.

But when the damage is only a tear, and none of the stamp is missing, a little cement on a piece of paper glued to the back of the stamp will repair it. Then the stamp should be ironed as explained above. For a hasty repair, a piece of hinge or gum paper is moistened and stuck on the back. Most stamps are damaged while being removed from the envelope and the damage is usually a tear; but no matter how long it may be the stamp can, in most cases, be repaired so that its condition will not be detected.

TO REVEAL WATERMARKS

If you are interested in watermarks you will be unable to detect all of them without some artificial means. The best "revealer" is undoubtedly benzine (or naphtha), a pint of which can be bought for 5c at the paint shop or grocer's. Pour about half a teaspoonful on the stamp and place the stamp face down on a smooth black surface, which hold in various positions until the light strikes it just right and the watermark becomes visible.

Most philatelists use a benzine cup, in place of a flat surface, in which to place the stamp to be examined. A good benzine cup usually costs from twenty five cents to half a dollar, but the following cup will cost you only your time. Take a thin glass tumbler (an old one will do which is nicked or cracked at the top, provided the bottom and the sides within an inch of the bottom are whole) and cut the glass off about an inch from the bottom. This is done by heating the glass carefully and running a wet string around the tumbler where it is to be cut. The moistened string instantly separates the glass. The tumbler

can first be heated in an oven, but care must be taken not to get the glass too hot or else it will crack.

Cut out a round piece of paper a little larger than the bottom of the tumbler and ink it so that it will be entirely black, and also blacken the bottom of the cup by smoking it. On the black side of the paper spread some mucilage and stick it to the bottom of the cup on the underneath side. When dry, trim off the edges of the paper that protrude and your cup is complete.

The stamp to be examined is placed face downward in the cup and just covered with benzine. The liquid makes the paper semi-transparent and this paper, being thinnest where the watermark occurs, causes the black background of the cup to show through in this particular spot in the stamp.

The watermark is made in the paper before the stamp is printed thereon and while it does not concern the beginner, it is often sought after by the advanced collector, or specialist, with a good deal of interest. On British Colonial stamps we find the greatest

number of watermarks, the most common ones being a crown and C. C. underneath, or a crown and C. A. The first, which was used down to about 1882, stands for Crown Colony and this was afterwards changed to the latter, meaning Crown Agents for the Colonies. These agents supply the stamps to the various English colonies.

It sometimes happens that the watermark determines the value of the stamp, as usually those stamps containing the earliest watermark are more valuable than the latter issues. For instance, the 1p stamp of the first issue of Lagos, watermarked with a crown and C. C. is considered twice as valuable as the same stamp issued in 1882 with the crown and C. A. watermark. However, the different values placed on stamps of different watermarks are largely fictitious and do not interest the majority of collectors. Every collector, however, should understand what is meant by the term "watermark," abbreviated "wm.," and also be able to detect them, should occasion require.

SUCCESSFUL STAMP AGENTS.

There is no article which sells so readily among boys as the postage stamp, no article on which a larger profit can be realized, and none which can be handled with greater ease. An agent can always carry his stock with him, yet is never bothered with its weight or bulk. An approval sheet, when folded up, fits nicely in a coat pocket and that is a good place for it when no customers are around.

But the pocket is no place for the sheet when a prospective buyer is about. The agent who is looking for business must, like the merchant who displays his wares in the store window, have his goods always in sight. An agent, to make a success of the business, must be eternally on the alert for a trade and never let a good opportunity for sale or exchange pass without making the most of it.

The most successful agents are not content to sell merely to a few of their most intimate friend collectors, but are constantly on the lookout for new customers. One customer usually knows of another, and is willing to mention his name, and so on. By means of this information a large list of buyers is gradually secured and a good business established. The wider the agent's acquaintances extend, the more business will be the result.

A stamp agent, like any successful person in business, must push his business along. No business will push

itself—the pushing is done solely by the man back of it.

The successful stamp agent, furthermore, is the person who knows something about the goods he is selling. A butcher who didn't know the difference between a rump and sirloin cut of beef wouldn't stand a very good show in the meat business. A stamp agent who knows nothing about stamps himself cannot impart much information to others who are examining his wares. Such an agent often feels doubtful about the very stamps he has for sale, is suspicious of the dealer who has supplied his stock, and is envious of his neighbor who may be acting as agent for some other house. One of his customers, who perhaps knows no more about stamps than he, but who pretends to know a great deal, tells him this specimen is priced too high; another, that this is a mere continental; a third, that such and such an unused stamp is a counterfeit. And in a very short time the poor agent is so much confused by this unreliable information that he does not know what he is doing.

The cost and time required to become posted on matters philatelic is not great, and the time is pleasantly spent. A priced catalogue and a small handbook defining and explaining the ordinary terms used by collectors will supply the necessary information. The illustrations in the catalogue soon enable a collector to become familiar with the different types and to

name the country from which each stamp comes.

An agent thus informed will under ordinary circumstances be more successful than a mere ignoramus. He can meet every criticism from a customer and is in a better position to judge of the actual value of the goods he is handling.

Agents who know what they are selling and who are willing to push the business, usually make a grand success of it. They find collectors everywhere, but especially among the boys in schools. On Saturdays and holidays the gymnasium and playgrounds abound with collectors. Many a stamp agent, while attending school or to other duties, earns in spare moments not only mere pocket money but dollars and cents which go towards his own comfort and support, or the support of others.

While John Wanamaker was postmaster-general, complete sets of cardboard proofs, each containing 211 different examples of U. S. stamps, were issued by the government. The average price of such sets is now about \$35.00.

The plates from which these proofs were printed have since been destroyed, the original dies alone remaining in the possession of the authorities.

AN ELABORATE COLLECTION.

The Earl of Crawford recently exhibited his collection of United States stamps before the members of the London Philatelic Association, who were amazed at the completeness and size of this magnificent collection. His United States stamps are contained in 40 large volumes, the first 23 being devoted to the stamps used only by the public, the remaining books to official stamps, including official seals, unpaid, periodical and department stamps. Each book is also filled with much historical data regarding the various issues, and the stamps are largely in blocks, to show their arrangement on the sheet, mode of separation, etc. Some space is given to the government reprints, and all varieties of perforation, water-mark and paper are shown. Not only the general issues of department stamps are collected, but also full sets of those surcharged "specimen" and various other novelties. Just think of 40 volumes for his United States stamps alone! What must be the size of his general collection?

GREAT AMOUNTS INVESTED IN STAMPS.

A firm which recently retired from business reports having received since 1877 over one million dollars from cash sales. The business was established at a period when stamp collec-

tors were few and the business was in its infancy. A prominent English dealer who visited this country not long ago reports having sold \$23,000 worth of stamps here in just two lots, not to mention numerous smaller sales.

A small collection of 150 stamps was purchased by a young collector not long ago for a few dollars. Only one stamp in the lot was worth anything, but that was an 1851 Hawaiian stamp of much value. Any dealer would have offered hundreds of dollars for that stamp. A gentleman found a book of about 200 stamps he had collected when a small boy. None of the stamps were then worth more than 10c each, but on pricing them recently he found one catalogued at \$50, one at \$25, three at \$10 and the balance at various prices down to \$5.

STAMPS HAVE AN EDUCATIONAL VALUE.

In a certain school foreign stamps are used as a help to the study of geography. Educators are beginning to recognize, and make use of, the information stored up in the tiny bit of paper called a postage stamp. School boys who collect stamps are always the best scholars in geography, they take a great interest in historical studies, and develop a taste for the artistic, since postage stamps are the product of the highest artistic attainment of the world's greatest artists, the designs and plates costing more than for any other work of art.

GREAT AMOUNTS INVESTED IN STAMPS.

Two "Post Office" Mauritius stamps, the 1p and 2p of the 1847 issue, were sold a few years ago to a Parisian dealer for the snug sum of \$4800 each. This is the highest price known to have been paid for single stamps. The next highest price on record is for the 10c U. S. Postmaster's stamp issued in Baltimore, of which only one specimen is known to exist. This was sold not long ago in New York for \$4500.

Three "Post Office" Mauritius stamps were sold in England recently for an average price per stamp of about \$4000. Probably the next highest price ever paid for a single stamp was \$3700, which went for the 2c Hawaiian stamp of the first issue. At a London auction sale \$2000 was paid for a 4p Western Australian stamp of the first issue with inverted center, of which only eight specimens can be located.

Immense sums have been paid for entire collections. Mr. M. P. Castle recently sold his collection of European stamps for no less than \$150,000. The same gentleman disposed of a collection of Australian stamps for \$50,000. Herr von Ferrary bought Judge Philbrick's collection for \$40,000. Dr. Legend of Paris sold a collection some years ago for about \$37,000.

It is not at all uncommon to hear of

an entire collection bringing from \$5000 to \$25,000, although we doubt if the average collection is worth over \$5. Besides stamp collecting, a great interest is taken in the collection of stamp literature, and we might mention many a library worth almost as much as the collection owned by the same individual.

THE TRUTH ABOUT REPRINTS.

Some collectors are still ignorant of the meaning of the term reprint, or re-impression, associating it with counterfeit. Reprints are impressions from the original plates, blocks or stones, from which stamps were printed, taken after the issue of the stamps had ceased, and are printed as specimens or curiosities for sale to collectors. Counterfeits, on the other hand, are not printed from the original plates, but are mere imitations. In 1899, when our government sold out a part of its stock of remaining newspaper stamps to collectors, it was found necessary to strike off certain values from the old plates to complete sets. These reimpressions were simply "reprints."

Unused specimens of the 1857 60 issue of U. S. stamps now in collections were obtained largely from Southern post offices after the issue had been demonetized owing to the outbreak of civil war.

SPECIMEN STAMPS

Collectors often ask the question: "Have specimen stamps any actual value?" All stamps printed from the original plates certainly have a value, but it is not always easy to estimate that value unless the number of stamps issued is definitely known and the estimator keeps in touch with the popular demand. Dealers are better judges of values than collectors because they have the best chance to test the relation between the supply and demand of a certain issue.

Unused stamps of British colonies surcharged "specimen" have been distributed from time to time throughout the Postal Union for the information of government officials, but sooner or later they fall into the hands of collectors. As the number of each value printed is usually less than 1000 copies, the supply is obviously insufficient to go round. Among specialists these stamps are quite necessary to complete a collection, but owing to their scarcity, they are seldom listed in the catalogues.

WHO COLLECT STAMPS?

Everybody. Nobody is too poor to collect the common stamps of North America or Europe. Nobody is too rich to fail to derive a benefit from a pursuit which entertains, instructs and is, under certain conditions, profitable. A conservative estimate places the total number of collectors in America alone at 200,000. In Europe, the number is still greater. The Prince of Wales, Prince Gustav Adolf of Sweden, the Mikado of Japan, Prince Damrong of Siam and many dukes, earls, counts, barons and baronets join hands with the every-day people in the most popular pursuit of the present time. The schoolboy is no longer alone an advocate of the charms of philately. His sister, his older brother, and many of his friends are as enthusiastic collectors as he.

Philippine Aguinaldo stamps are not regarded by most collectors as anything more than speculative labels, and few catalogues even mention them.

The proverbial "Stamp Season" now lasts all the year.

The Japanese soldiers are usually paid in paper money, the bills being similar to the one reproduced in the accompanying picture. These bills are

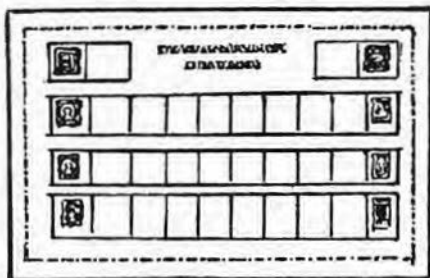


JAPANESE PAPER MONEY.

much more convenient for them to carry than gold or silver, and they are negotiable at any place in the empire. They answer just as well as coin in supplying the needs of the soldier for the mikado. Like nearly everything Japanese, they are artistic in design.

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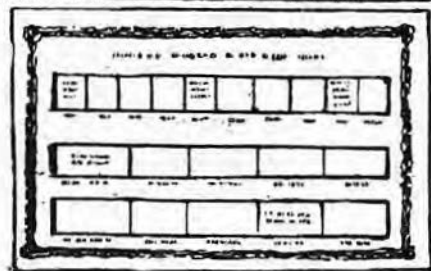


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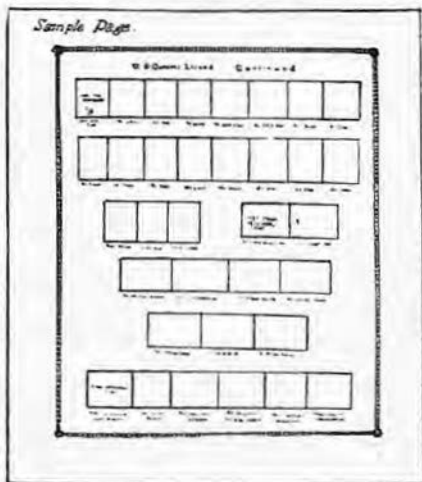
For the Stamps of the

UNITED STATES and the U. S. COLONIES



contains regular spaces, with descriptions, for all the United States stamps, including general issues commemorative issues, departmentals, locals, revenues, envelope stamps, etc., also illustrated pages for the stamps of the Hawaiian Islands, Porto Rico, the Philippine Islands, etc., to which are added extra pages for Cuba and duplicates, minor varieties, etc. The pages are full size, measuring about 9 by 11 1/2 inches, and the printing is on one side of the page only. The paper is of superior quality and the printing first class. The book is strongly bound in artistic, half-cloth covers and ought to sell for \$1.00; but we have set a popular price on it that every collector may possess a copy. This is a large and beautiful album, the latest and best edition out, postpaid for only

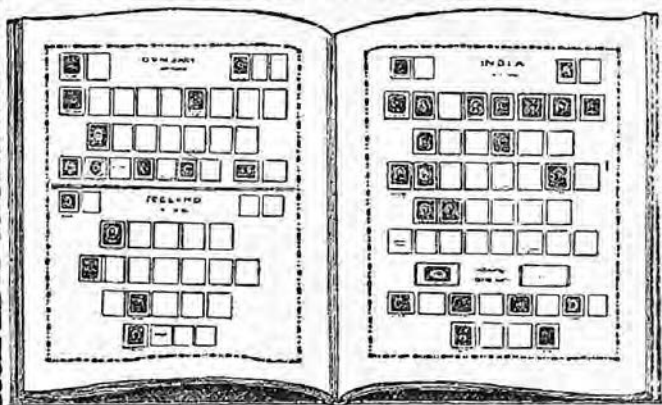
Sample Page.



65c

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