

Stamp Corner

By George Cheren

THE HOBBY OF KINGS AND KIDS
(Continued)

Guest Columnist John J. Britt

(Mr. Britt is chairman of the Board of Hollywood Stamp Club, Member of National U.S. Postal Service Committees, Past President of the U.S. Airmail Society, Collectors Club of New York and has many other national and international Philatelic accomplishments.)

Contrary to popular belief, the scarcity or age alone of any particular stamp is not the sole determining factor in establishing its price when offered for sale. The matter of popularity and desirability enter into the picture whenever the monetary value of the stamp is being considered. There are many cases in stamp collecting where a stamp may be rare, but for various reasons the price remains nominal.

Periodically, certain countries achieve a measure of popularity and for some time thereafter their postal emissions show a consistent increase in price, but when the collectors interest begins to lag the price recedes to its normal value.

The "Classics" (Imperforate issues from 1840 to 1870) are constantly being sought after by knowledgeable philatelists and as a consequence, the competition so endangered reflects the upward trend of the philatelic market.

There are many examples or "errors" in stamp collecting; some deliberately created, while others come through the printing process quite by accident. The latter are in demand by specialists and usually command a fairly high price.

Perhaps the most classic example of a genuine "error" was inadvertently created by our own "Bureau of Engraving and Printing" in Washington, D.C., when in 1918 the 24 cent air mail issue was on the presses.

Inasmuch as this was to be a two colored stamp, each sheet had to be printed in two stages, one to obtain the red impression of the frame and run through the presses again for the blue center portion of the plane. By some strange circumstance, one of the sheets with the red impression only became turned around in the feeding process and when the plane in blue was applied to it the plane was printed in an upside down position. One sheet of 100 stamps found their way into philatelic hands and this 24 cent air mail with inverted center has become the most popular of all stamps issued by the United States.

While the foregoing is merely a smattering of what stamp collecting can really be like, it is our intention to create interest in our hobby. For those of you who might desire more information regarding the collecting of stamps, write George Cheren, 150 S.E. Second Avenue, Miami, Florida 33131.

BOOK CORNER

By

Mrs. Gladys Coletta

I Chose Prison

by James V. Bennett, 1970, Pp. 229, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., N. Y.

Today's prison system is far from perfect, but even so, it has come a long way, states James V. Bennett in his autobiography, *I Chose Prison*. The book is a personal account of the author's life for twenty-seven years as director of the United States Federal prisons.

Rehabilitation, not retribution, should be the true course to follow in our pursuit of the rule of law, declares the author. Prison life is unnatural at best, without adding the torture and indignity of medieval justice to the cringing victim. The pillory, the ball and chain, "The hole", the gas chamber have all labeled mankind as being far from civilized. However, society now believes in the value of the "second chance" in controlling crime by means of the indeterminate sentence, vocational training, and the "halfway house".

With these reforms in mind, the author decided to be his "brother's keeper", at least for twenty-seven years while he was director of the federal prisons. Substituting kindness for cruelty, and accomplishing reforms for atrocities, Mr. Bennett sought to compensate somewhat for the disparity suggested by the old adage "There, but for the grace of God, go I".

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