



The Westfield Philatelist

Newsletter of the Westfield Stamp Club

American Philatelic Society Chapter #540

American Topical Association Chapter #113

Volume 11 Number 5 May/June 2018

UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 22, 2018 -

“May 24, 2018 - Identifying the Eight U.S. Antebellum 3-cent Washington Stamps, aka Flyspeck Philately 101

By Don Getzin.



3-cent Washington.
1857-61
(Scott No. - I have no idea!
But the letter inside is dated
Feb 5 1858)

June 28, 2018-

“South Africa”

By Eddie Bridges

Plus Election of Officers & Board of Governors

1942-44 Bantam War Issue



Nurse.1943
(Scott 91b)



Airman. 1942
(Scott 92)



Sailor.1943
(Scott 93a)



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JOTTINGS: AMERICAN ENTRY IN WWI

Centenary of American entry into World War I. The stamp depicts American doughboys marching with the American flag. In the upper left is the American *Jenny* airplane; General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force on the Western Front is shown in the upper right and the USS *Rochester* that escorted the expeditionary force to France is seen in the lower right. France 2017 (Scott 5256)



May/June Philatelic Quiz

- Q1. In 1903 a National Park ranger, Charles Leidig, described the camping trip by these two men “as the most consequential” in American history. Who were these men and why was it described as above?
- Q2. Where did the name of this fictional ship, found in a classic nineteenth century science-fiction novel that was later made into a 1954 Disney film, come from?
- Q3. What did the older brother of John Jay invent that proved useful during the time of the American Revolution?
- Q4. What United Stamp shows *Lefty's Deceiver*?
- Q5. What northeastern South American country was split in 1930 from another country and then re joined that same country in 1946 and issued its own stamps during that sixteen year period?

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Meetings are held at 8:00PM on the fourth Thursday of the month except for November (third Thursday) and July and August (summer recess). The club meets in the Community Room of the Westfield Town Hall located in the center of Westfield at 425 East Broad Street.

Dues are \$8.00 per membership year which runs from September 1 to August 31.

The club newsletter will be published every two months from September to June.

For information visit
our website

www.westfieldstampclub.org

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RECENT ARTICLES WRITTEN BY MEMBERS

Roger Brody - "And the B®and Played On— American's Centenarian Enterprises: H.J. Heinz Company". *The United States Specialist* 2018; 89(5):199-201.

Jack André Denys - (1) "Jerry Husak:1932–2018 ATA Founder". *Topical Time* 2018;69(2):18. (2) "Funtastic Filately: The News and A New Page". *Topical Time* 2018;69(2):58-59.

Frederick C. Skvara - (1) "Sphagnum Moss Saved Lives". *Scalpel & Tongs:American Journal of Medical Philately* 2018;62(1):11-13. (2) Elizabeth Gunn and The Children's Health Camps of New Zealand". *Scalpel & Tongs:American Journal of Medical Philately* 2018;62(1):15-17. (3) "The Death of President William Henry Harrison". *Scalpel & Tongs:American Journal of Medical Philately* 2018;62(1):18. (4) "Ships That Never Sailed". *Americana Philatelic News* 2018;48(240):18-20. (5) Chapter Chatter". *Topical Time*. 2018;69(2):71–78.



APRIL FOOL'S DAY – FRENCH STYLE

By Edward Grabowski

This is being written at the end of April. I had hoped to write it prior to April 1st, but that has not come to pass. The French have their own twist on April Fool's Day. It is called *Poisson d'Avril* which translates as the fish of April, but in France it means April Fool's Day itself. As in many places around the world, it is a day of jokes and pranks. On this day French children try to secretly stick a picture of a fish on friends' backs. When the joke is discovered they shout, "Poisson d'Avril!" See Figure 1 to see what it looks like from the joker's point of view.

However, there is another French aspect of this day that has come up in my Group Type collection. It can be called *Joyeux Poisson d'Avril*. At the turn of the 20th century the French sent fish cards to their loved ones, as fish also symbolized love and friendship. An example of a fish card is seen in Figure 2. Above the beautiful young lady is seen the date: 1^{er} Avril, and below her is a basket with fish coming out. The reverse of the card (Figure 3) is franked with a 5c Group Type stamp cancelled in the town of Saint Pierre, Saint Pierre & Miquelon. It is addressed to Mademoiselle Henriette Borotra, En Ville (in the village). The French message reads: This dear fish will tell you all my affection and my love. From a friend who loves you dearly and who wants to talk to you. Guess. This fellow sounds pretty serious. Interestingly, the card is underfranked, as the 5c rate applied to postcards with messages of five words or less. This one should have traveled at the 10c rate. Possibly the postal clerks in Saint Pierre felt this most important message should travel without delay.

I have a related postcard sent locally in Nouméa, New Caledonia. The picture side of the card (Figure 4) is franked with a 5c Group Type stamp overprinted with the Jubilee cachet of 1903. The French in New Caledonia were celebrating 50 years of French rule of the colony. The card was mailed on April 27, 1904, a bit after April 1st. The picture shows a nice floral and ribbon arrangement, but no fish. The reverse of the card (Figure 5) is addressed to one Mademoiselle Jeanne Teulet of Nouméa. But there is no message of love present. Did Jeanne know who the writer was? We will never know. A belated *Poisson d'Avril* to all!



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Sphagnum Moss Saved Lives

By Frederick C. Skvara

The botanical family Sphagnaceae consists of a single genus, *Sphagnum*, containing over 300 species, most of which are found in the glaciated areas of the Northern Hemisphere. Known commonly as peat moss or bog moss, they grow in wet habitats, often in peat bogs. The name *Sphagnum* is from the Greek for unknown plant.

Sphagnum moss has two features that led to its use in medicine:

1) The cellular structure of *Sphagnum* gives it a spongelike quality as it can hold up to 22 times its own weight in water. This remarkable ability stems from the fact that normally 90% of the cells in a *Sphagnum* plant are achlorophyllous 'hyaline' cells whose function is to store water. Water is absorbed through surface pores which are large enough to also allow bacteria and red blood cells to be absorbed. This absorbant quality was used to soak up wound fluids such as blood and pus.

2) It has antiseptic properties resulting from the acidic environment that the plant creates around itself. This harsh acidic environment limits the type of organisms that can survive in it. The cell walls of *Sphagnum* are rich in Spagnan, a pectin-like polymer that gives *Sphagnum* a high cation exchange capacity. It imports cations such as sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium and exports hydrogen ions (H^+). The increase in H^+ lowers the extracellular pH creating an acidic environment inhibiting bacterial growth. The optimum pH environment for most pathogenic bacteria is around 7.4 approximately the pH of human blood.

Sphagnum moss has been used for over 1000 years in treating wounds incurred in battle. In 1014 at the Battle of Clontarf near Dublin, Ireland, and in 1513 at the Battle of Flodden in Northumberland, England, the wounds of the wounded were stuffed with moss to reduce the flow of blood. It was also used during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871) and Crimean War (1853–1856). Native Americans used it as a natural diaper to line the cradles of their infants.

World War I

But the full medical potential of *Sphagnum* wasn't fully realized until World War I. From the beginning of the war the Germans were utilizing *Sphagnum* bandages in treating wounds incurred by the Germans in battles. In late 1914 the need for wound dressings increased markedly and cotton wool for dressings, besides the fact that it had to be imported, was increasingly being used in

Sphagnum palustre.
Liechtenstein 1981 (Scott 716)



First Day maximum card

Sphagnum Moss Saved Lives (cont.)

By Frederick C. Skvara

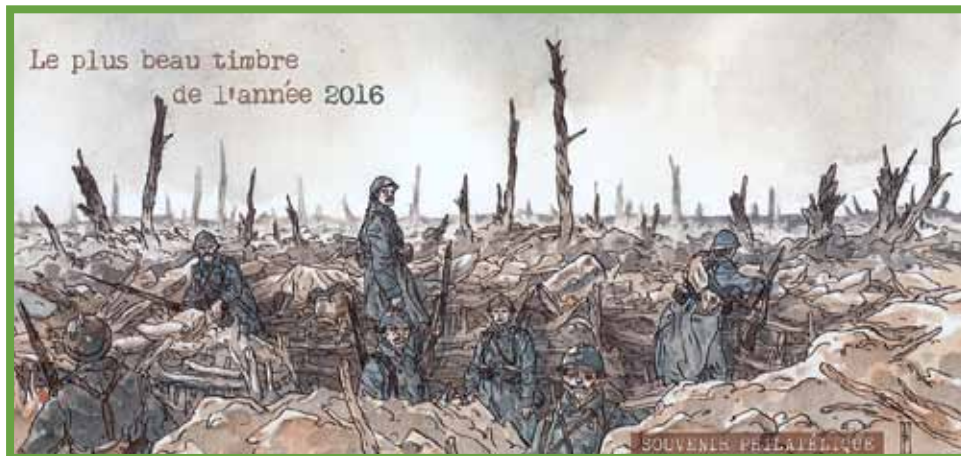
the manufacture of nitrocellulose explosives.

In November 1914 Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Walker Cathcart (1853–1932), an Edinburgh surgeon on wartime duty as a Consulting Surgeon to military hospitals around Edinburgh, coauthored an article for *The Scotsman*, an Edinburgh newspaper, with Professor Isaac Bayley Balfour, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. In the article they noted the value of *Sphagnum* dressings as they could absorb blood, pus and lymph at a higher rate than cotton dressings and that the moss was readily available in the British Isles.

Cathcart conducted a number of trials with the moss for use as dressings and surgical swabs, but also found the moss could be formed into large cushions that could be used to keep beds dry while wounds were being irri-

gated with hypochlorous acid. This acid (HClO) and its ion (ClO⁻) are oxidizers and primary disinfection agents in chlorine solutions. In addition, the cation exchange capacity of *Sphagnum* was increased in the presence of the chlorine and helps explain the increased in situ anti-septic properties of *Sphagnum* dressings.

The Western Front in World War I was mainly fought in trenches that were often muddy and had poor sanitation. The uniforms of the soldiers were frequently filthy and contaminated with soil bacteria from the battlefields and sewage bacteria from the trenches. Bullets and shrapnel would carry pieces of these dirty uniforms deep into the wounds that often led to infection and sup-
puration.



Top: Battle of Verdun, Centenary – Cover of souvenir folder showing one of the trenches.

Bottom: Souvenir pane of one stamp and two production proofs. The dates denote – the first day of the Battle of Verdun (February 21, 1916); the death of Lt. Col. Émile Briant at the Caures Wood (February 22, 1916); the reconquering of Douaumont, a network of fortifications, by the French (October 24, 1916) and the reoccupation of the Fort de Vaux by the French (November 3, 1916).

[The Battle of Verdun was fought from February 21, 1916 to December 18, 1916]

Sphagnum Moss Saved Lives (cont.)

By Frederick C. Skvara

In February 1916 *Sphagnum* surgical dressings were approved by the War Office and by June Cathcart's 'Edinburgh War Dressings Supply' organization sent out 20,000 dressings. By the end of 1916, 200,000 dressings a month were being sent and by the end of the war, that figure had climbed to 1,000,000 per month. Eventually the work of Cathcart was spread around the world with dressings sent to about sixty hospitals in the various theatres of the war.

Collecting the Moss

Two species of moss were found to be most effective for wound dressings: *Sphagnum palustre* and *Sphagnum papillosum*. These species were abundant in the northern parts of Britain where the weather was cooler and wetter, but collecting the plants was labor intensive and mostly carried out by volunteers (mainly women, children and elderly men). As the name bog moss implies, these plants were found in bogs and one Scottish organizer noted collection often entailed "bare-legged lassie(s) working for hours in the cold driving rain, more than 1,000 feet above sea level". Even scout troops went on prospecting expeditions to collect the moss, an activity fully approved by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout, when he visited Edinburgh in August 1917.

In September 1916 the *London Graphic* ran a headline "Are You Collecting Sphagnum Moss?" The accompanying article told its readers: "The collecting, drying and making into surgical dressings of Sphagnum moss has become a national industry in Scotland...the work is being extended all over Ireland, England and Wales." In North America the practice of collecting and preparing dressings from Sphagnum was introduced by Professor John B. Porter of McGill University in Montreal, Québec, Canada.

The moss would be picked clean of dirt at the site of collection and then sent to one of the centers where it was processed and formed into dressings.



Kauhaneva bog in Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas National Park. Finland 1981 (Scott 627)

The Flanders Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) will be forever associated with remembering the dead of the battlefields on the Western Front in World War I because of the poem *In Flanders Fields* by the Canadian physician John McCrae. But the life-saving role played by *Sphagnum* or bog moss should not be overlooked and probably deserves equal celebrity status as the poppy.

Today, *Sphagnum* bandages are no longer used because of the great amount of labor needed to collect and process it. In addition peatlands full of *Sphagnum* and other mosses are rich ecosystems and the bogs they create are important pockets of biodiversity that should be preserved.



Flanders poppy. Belgium 2008 (Scott 2340c)



Raba bog (Tolkuse bog). Estonia 2016 (Scott 803)

Reprinted from *Scalpel & Tongs: American Journal of Medical Philately* 2018; 62(1):11-13]





Answers to March/April Philatelic Quiz



Prepared by Frederick C. Skvara

Q1. A fictional nuclear-powered aircraft carrier appears on a U.S. commemorative postage stamp. Do you know what stamp and where that ship appeared in fiction?

Ans. **1957 3-cent International Naval Review (Scott 1091).**

On June 10, 1957, the United States Post Office Department issued a 3¢ commemorative (Scott 1091) for the International Naval Review and the Jamestown Festival. The stamp depicts a Forrestal-class aircraft carrier, No. 88, against a background of silhouetted outlines of ships participating in the International Naval Review. The stamp also shows the Jamestown Festival insignia showing outlines of three ships underlined by “1607–1957” signifying the 350th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown in Virginia. The three ship outlines probably represent *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed* and *Discovery*, owned by the Virginia Company, and the landing on May 14, 1607, established the first permanent English-speaking colony in the Americas. A map of the Hampton Roads area, the site of the landings can be seen near the insignia on the stamp.



But aircraft carrier No. 88 is fictional as the latest actual carrier is No. 79 (USS *Gerald R. Ford*). Aircraft carrier No. 88, the USS *Saratoga*, is nuclear-powered and the flagship of a United States naval task force depicted in *Godzilla*, a 2014 American monster film produced by Warner Bros. Pictures. That film is based on the original *Godzilla* film series produced in Japan beginning in 1954. [Ref: “Number 88 –No Way!” by Pat & Bob Weidman in *Stamping Around*, February 2018.]



Q2. What country printed stamps on cigarette paper?

Ans. **Latvia**

Latvia was a major battleground between the armies of the German Empire and the Russian Empire during World War I leaving its economy and agriculture in tatters. There were a number of shortages including paper for postage stamps so the Latvians used occupation banknotes and German military maps left behind by the Germans to produce postage stamps. But they also used cigarette paper referred to in the Scott catalogue as *pelure paper*, a thin, hard, nearly transparent paper. Latvia became an independent state in 1918 and in 1919 issued several sets of stamps on *pelure paper*. The stamp shown here was issued in 1919 (Scott 11) and shows arms and sun.



Q3. Who was the only United States president to serve two non-consecutive terms as president?

Ans. **Grover Cleveland (Scott 827)**

Grover Cleveland was born in Caldwell, New Jersey, but moved to New York at the age of four, first to Fayetteville, then, when he was fourteen, to Clinton New York. After obtaining a law degree and practicing as an attorney in Buffalo, he entered politics becoming Mayor of Buffalo in 1882 and Governor of New York in the 1882 gubernatorial election. On March 4, 1885, he became the 22nd president of the United States. He lost his bid for re-election in 1888 losing to Benjamin Harrison, but won the 1892 election to become the 24th





Answers to March/April Philatelic Quiz



Prepared by Frederick C. Skvara

Q3. cont.

president, the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms. He died on June 24, 1908, in Princeton, New Jersey.



Q4. *One of the battles in Operation Detachment during World War II led to an iconic image that was used on a United States commemorative postage stamp. Do you know what stamp?*

Ans. 1945 Iwo Jima (Scott 929)

Operation Detachment in World War II was the designation of the American invasion of Iwo Jima, one of the Volcano Islands, a group of three small islands in the Western Pacific Ocean south of the Bonin Islands and considered part of Japan. Following World War II they were administered by the United States until 1968 when they were returned to Japan. The battle of Iwo Jima, one of the bloodiest in the Pacific Theatre, lasted from February 19, 1945 to March 26, 1945. On February 23 United States Marines planted the United States flag on the crest of Mt. Suribachi. This event was captured on film by the Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal and his photograph became the basis for the United States commemorative stamp issued on July 11, 1945. Rosenthal received the 1945 Pulitzer Prize for that photograph.



Q5. *What is the current name of the country that was formed from the Chagos Islands and currently has no permanent residents?*

Ans. British Indian Ocean Territory

The Chagos Archipelago is a group of islands and atolls in the Indian Ocean south of the Maldives. Initially claimed by the French as a possession of Mauritius in the eighteenth century, the territory was ceded to the United Kingdom by the 1814 Treaty of Paris. In 1965 the British Indian Ocean Territory was formed by the United Kingdom from the Chagos Archipelago and several islands from the Seychelles. When Seychelles gained independence in 1976, its islands were returned to its control. The total land area is less than 76 square miles. A joint British-American defense facility is located on the largest island, Diego Garcia and only military personnel and civilian contractors live on the island. There are no permanent residents as the native Chagossians were forcibly removed to Mauritius and Seychelles between 1968 and 1973.



B.I.O.T. 1990 (Scott 110)



B.I.O.T. 1968 (Scott 12)

A Marine sanctuary was established around the waters of the Archipelago in 2010 and is an important breeding area for seabirds and turtles.

The British Indian Ocean Territory issued its first stamps on January 17, 1968, overprinting a 1962 set from Seychelles with "B.I.O.T." Later that year they began issuing their own set of stamps with the full name of the territory. [Ref: "Birth of a Colony" by James Watson. *The Gibbons-Whitman Stamp Monthly* 1968; 1(8):281-282.]

