



# The Westfield Philatelist

Newsletter of the Westfield Stamp Club

American Philatelic Society Chapter #540

American Topical Association Chapter #113

Volume 14 Number 5 May/June 2021

## UPCOMING MEETINGS (VIRTUAL)

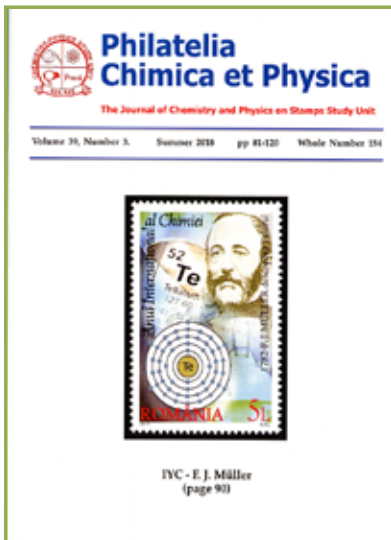
May 27, 2021 – “The Columbian Envelopes of 1893 – Front & Back”

By Dr. Marvin Platt



June 24, 2021 – “The World of Chemistry on Postage Stamps”

By Professor Dan Rabinovich



Cover of *Philatelia Chimica et Physica*, *The Journal of Chemistry and Physics on Stamps Study Unit* of the American Topical Association. The stamp shown was issued by Romania in 2011 to commemorate the discovery of Tellurium (Te), atomic number 52, in 1783 by chemist F.J. Müller. The United Nations declared 2011 as the International Year of Chemistry.

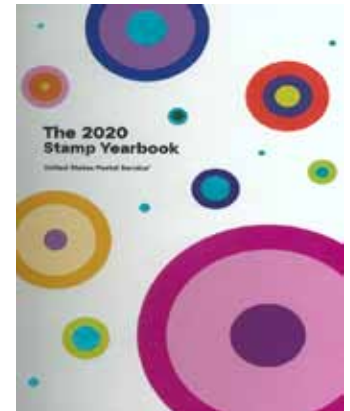


## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Upcoming Meetings (Virtual) . . . . .	1
From the Editor’s Den. . . . .	1
May/June USPS Stamp Issues . . . . .	2
Colorado Hairstreak Butterfly, nonmachineable, surcharge-rate stamp . . . . .	2
May/June Philatelic Quiz . . . . .	2
Answers to March/April Philatelic Quiz . . . . .	3
The Topical Alphabet: G is for Geology . . . . .	6
The Great Fear of 1789 & the French Revolution . . . . .	8
William Shakespeare, Part 2 . . . . .	13
Discover the World: Honduras . . . . .	18

## FROM THE EDITOR’S DEN

I have been obtaining the United States Post Office Stamp Yearbooks since they were first issued in 1968. The *USPS 2020 Stamp Yearbook* is a 48-page glossy hard-bound book with 56 commemorative stamps and clear mounts. For many of the stamps there is background information on the stamp along with some preliminary designs as well as the final design and a place to mount the stamp(s). The included stamps have a face value of \$30.80 and the cost of the yearbook is \$91.00.



It was produced in a limited edition of 13,000 each of which is numbered – my copy is No. 5095. There are two sections: Section 1 is labeled “Commemorative Stamps” and Section 2 is labeled Mail-Use Stamps. The stamps for Section 2 are not included in the above price and have to be purchased separately in two packets. The 2020 Mail-Use Stamp Packet costs \$54.35 and contains 80 stamps with a face value of \$43.75. The 2020 High Value Stamp Packet costs \$39.80 and contains 3 stamps with a face value of \$35.30.

Contrast the 2020 yearbook with the *1968 Postage Stamps – Special Issues* shown below which is a tri fold folder containing 18 stamps having a face value of \$1.12. The stamps are loose in a glassine envelope to be mounted behind clear plastic strips on the dark olive center page of the folder. There is a short description for each stamp, but no other images.



## The Westfield Philatelist

### Editor

Frederick C. Skvara  
PO Box 6228

Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Tel: 908-442-2795

email: fcskvara@optonline.net

## The Westfield Stamp Club

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Because of the pandemic, meetings are currently virtual on the fourth Thursday of the month except for November (third Thursday) and July and August (summer recess). 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](http://www.westfieldstampclub.org)

or call

Nick Lombardi

908-233-3045

## May to June USPS Stamp Issues

May 4	<b>Star Wars Droids. Ten (55¢) forever commemorative stamps, pane of 20.</b>
May 17	<b>Heritage Breeds. Ten (55¢) forever commemorative stamps, pane of 20.</b>
June 1	<b>Mallard Drake. One (36¢) postal card.</b>
June 3	<b>Go for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers of WWII. One (55¢) forever commemorative stamp.</b>
June 10	<b>Emilio Sanchez. Four (55¢) forever commemorative stamps, pane of 20.</b>
June 18	<b>Sun Science. ten (55¢) forever commemorative stamps, pane of 20.</b>
June 24	<b>Yogi Berra. One (55¢) forever commemorative stamp.</b>
June ?	<b>Lesser Scaup Drage. \$25 federal migratory waterfowl hunting and conservation stamp.</b>

The latest nonmachineable, surcharge-rate, nondenominated (75¢) stamp was issued on March 9 and depicts the Colorado Hairstreak Butterfly (*Hypaurotis crysalus*). The stamp was designed by USPS art director Derry Noyes using artwork by Tom Engen and issued in panes of 20.

In 1996 it was designated Colorado's state insect. Less than 2 inches in width with purple wings having black borders and orange accents. It is found at elevations of 6,500 to 9,000 feet in scrub oak habitat where it is completely dependent on the Gambel Oak (*Quercus gambelii*). The adults lay their eggs on the oak twigs, the caterpillars eat the young leaves of the oak and the adult subsists entirely on sap and sugary secretions from oak galls and raindrops on the oak leaves.



## MAY/JUNE PHILATELIC QUIZ

- Q1. What country in Africa was known to old navigators as the "grain coast"?
- Q2. What was the last proposed United States commemorative postage stamp approved by Franklin D. Roosevelt?
- Q3. What United States presidents have been pictured twice on a single United States stamp?
- Q4. Do you know of any stamps that depict the Prince of Darkness?
- Q5. Since 1897 Canada has issued stamps commemorating Canadian explorers. What ship is the most commemorated ship of any Canadian explorer?


**ANSWERS TO MARCH/APRIL  
PHILATELIC QUIZ**


**Q1.** Who was the only man in the history of the United States to serve both as President and a justice of the United States Supreme Court?

Ans. **William Howard Taft**



1930

William Howard Taft was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on September 15, 1857, and was educated at Yale University and Cincinnati Law School, where he eventually served as Dean. Before being elected as the 17th President of the United States in 1908, he served as United States Solicitor General under Benjamin Harrison, was a 6th circuit federal judge, the civil governor of the Philippines and in 1904 joined Theodore Roosevelt's Cabinet as Secretary of War.



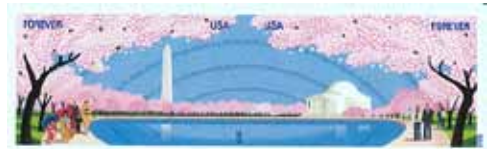
1938

He was defeated for reelection by Woodrow Wilson in 1912 and in 1914 joined the faculty of Yale as a law professor. In 1921 President Warren G. Harding appointed Taft as chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, the first and only person to serve as both United States President and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. He served until shortly before his death from heart disease on March 8, 1930. He was the first president and chief justice to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.



The city of Tokyo gave 3,020 cherry trees to the city of Washington, D.C. in 1912. On March 27, 1912, President Taft's wife, Helen "Nellie" Herron Taft (1861–1943), and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador planted the first two cherry trees in the Capital's Tidal Basin of the now famous cherry trees. [Ref: *Linn's Stamp News*, "Tips"; Mar 14, 2016]

Helen Taft.  
Gambia 2007



Cherry Blossom Centennial. 2012



**Q2.** Who was the only United States President to obtain a patent?

Ans. **Abraham Lincoln**

Born in Hardin County, Kentucky on February 12, 1809, the self-educated Lincoln served as a postmaster, store clerk and surveyor. before entering politics. He received his law license in 1836 and devoted part of his practice to patent law. From his experience ferrying passengers and freight on the Great Lakes and midwestern rivers and occasionally having the boat being hung up on obstructions, he invented a system to lift boats over obstacles. Submitted to the United States Patent Office on May 10, 1849, patent No. 6469 "Buoying Vessels over Shoals" was issued on May 22 that year. His invention utilized floatable bladders with buoyant air chambers to lift the ships. The device was never produced, but a model of his invention is at the Smithsonian Institution. ["The Value of Common Sense" by Winfred Parlin. *Stamps Magazine* November 19, 1988]



1938



# ANSWERS TO MARCH/APRIL PHILATELIC QUIZ

Q3. What is the first United States comic strip that used word balloons and multiple panels and is illustrated on a United States stamp?

Ans: **Katzenjammer Kids**

An American invention, the newspaper comic strip debuted as a one-panel cartoon without dialogue in the late nineteenth century. Richard Felton Outcault (1863–1928) while working for Joseph Pullitzer’s *New York World* newspaper as an illustrator in 1895, began drawing a one-panel, cartoon in black and white “Down Hogan’s Alley” showing a bald-headed kid in a frock. When the newspaper added yellow to the boy’s frock, the first identifiable cartoon character, “The Yellow Kid” was born.



United States 1995

On December 12, 1897, publisher William Randolph Herst in the Sunday supplement to the *New York Journal American*, “The American Humorist”, introduced the “Katzenjammer Kids”, a multiple-panel comic strip that now had dialogue between the characters in the form of word balloons. The strip features the exploits of the twins Hans and Fritz, two little German boys who seemed to be always get-

ting in trouble.



United States 1995

Rudolph Dirks (1877–1968), a German-born comic strip artist who worked at the *New*

*York Journal-American* developed the Katzenjammer Kids comic strip based on *Max and Moritz*, an 1865 German language illustrated story in verse by Heinrich Christian Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908), a German humorist, poet and illustrator. In 1912 Dirks took his strip to the *New York World* and changed its name to “Hans & Fritz” and then to “The Captain and the Kids”.



Max and Moritz  
Saar 1958



Wilhelm Busch  
Saar 1958

In 2020 Michel Publications published a 208-page, full-color catalogue *Comics – Ganze Welt (Comics – The Whole World)* showing several thousand stamps issued by over 100 countries depicting comic motifs. [Ref: “The Very Early Days of the American Newspaper Comic

Strip” by Dennis Carmen. *Global Stamp News*, December 2005]



Q4. What feminine figure replaced Ceres, goddess of agriculture on the stamps of Portugal?

Ans: **Laurel-wreathed Liberty**



Ceres.  
Portugal 1917



“Portugal”  
Portugal 1931

Between 1912 and 1926, the small definitive stamps of Portugal featured a portrait of Ceres, goddess of agriculture. In 1931 a new feminine figure appeared on the small definitives of Portugal. The allegorical figure of “Portugal” is depicted as a laurel-wreathed Liberty holding a book opened to a page showing a cross and inscribed *Lusiadas*. Written by Luis Vaz de Camoens (1524–1580) and published in



Luis Vaz de Camoens.  
Portugal 1924



*Lusiadas*  
Portugal 1917

1572, *Lusiadas* is Camoens’ poetic and dramatic account of Vasco da Gama’s voyage around the Cape of Good Hope to India in 1497–1498 and is considered Portugal’s national epic. [Ref: *Scott’s Monthly Journal*, June 1931]



Q5. Can you name two stamps that depict the Mercator or Van der Grinten map projections of the earth?

Ans. **Canada 1898 (Scott 85 & 86); United States 1935 (Scott 733)**

**Gerardus Mercator (1512–1594)** was a Flemish geographer and cartographer who invented the map projection system named after him, the Mercator Projection. In this system, principally used by navigators, lines of longitude are parallel, but land masses in the higher latitudes (60 degrees north or south latitude) are distorted and greatly exaggerated. The projection can be seen on the 1898 Imperial Penny Issue of Canada (Scott 85 & 86) that shows the expansive British Empire. Canada appears much larger than the United States when in reality it is only slightly larger than the United States. Although it is considered the first Christmas Topical as “Xmas 1898” is printed on the bottom of the stamp, it was intended to mark the introduction of an Imperial Post (2 cents in Canada) due to take effect on Christmas Day.



Canada 1898  
Mercator Projection]

**Alphons Johann van der Grinten (1852–1921)** was a German-

American cartographer and engineer who worked for the Rand McNally company after emigrating to the United States in 1881. He was issued a patent on October 2, 1899, for his map projection, the van der Grinten projection. In his projection, both the parallels (the imaginary lines representing degrees of latitude that encircle the earth parallel to the plane of the equator) and the meridians (imaginary great circles on the earth's surface passing through the north and south geographic poles) are represented by arcs of circles, except for the equator and central meridian which are straight lines. The meridians are equally spaced along the equator, but the parallels are spaced at increasing distances toward the poles.

The van der Grinten projection can be seen on the 1933 United States stamp issued for the 1933-1934 Byrd Antarctic Expedition to the South Pole. That stamp also shows Byrd's 1926 flight from Spitzbergen, Norway to the North Pole as well as his 1927 Trans-Atlantic flight and his 1929 flight to the South pole. As the distances in the high latitudes with the van der Grinten projection are exaggerated you will notice on the Byrd stamp that the Byrd's flight from Spitzbergen to the North Pole appears longer than the trans-Atlantic flight, when in actuality the Atlantic crossing was much longer.



United States 1933 [van der Grinten Projection]



## Why did Spain Issue a Stamp for an American Naval Hero?

By *Frederick C. Skvara*

On July 20, 2018, Spain issued a single € 0.55 commemorative stamp to mark the 150th anniversary of David Farragut's visit to the birthplace of his father in Spain in 1868. David Farragut was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1801 and named James. His father, Jorge Farragut (1755–1817) was born in Ciutadella de Menorca, a port city on the west coast of Menorca one of the Balearic islands in the Mediterranean Sea which at the time was an overseas territory of Great Britain. He left Menorca, joined the Spanish merchant marine and captained a small merchant vessel.



David Farragut. Spain 2018

In 1766 Jorge Farragut emigrated to the United States and changed his name to George Farragut. When James Farragut's mother (Elizabeth Shine) died in 1808 during a yellow fever epidemic, he went to live as the adopted son of David Porter, a naval officer and friend of his father. He grew up as the adoptive brother of the future admiral of the Civil War, David Dixon Porter, and took the name of David in honor of his adoptive father.



David Farragut  
1903

David Farragut (1801–1870) was the first rear admiral, vice admiral and admiral in the United States Navy and took part in the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War and the American Civil War where he had major victories at the Battle of New Orleans and Mobile Bay.



David Farragut, David Dixon  
Porter & U.S.S. *Hartford*.  
1937

# G IS FOR GEOLOGY

Geology is the study of the earth, its composition, structure, processes and history. It deals with the rocks and minerals of the earth's crust, the fossilized remains of plants and animals, and the history of the Earth since its formation some 4.54 billion years ago. A number of other topics – including volcanoes, earthquakes, weather, mountains, etc. – could be included under the umbrella of geology.

Alexandr Petrovich Karpinsky (1847–1936) was a Russian geologist and mineralogist who studied at the mining school in St. Petersburg and in 1869 became a Professor at the St. Petersburg Mining Institute. Elected to the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1866, he became its President in 1917. His main research was in the Ural Mountains and he completed the first geological map of European Russia. Named in his honor is the mineral karpinskite, the lunar crater Karpinsky, the Karpinsky Group of Volcanoes in the Kuril Islands and Mt. Karpinsky in the Ural Mountains. Russia 1947 (First geology topical stamp)



## Fossils from the Natural History Museum, Berlin (German Democratic Republic 1973)



*Lebachia speciosa* is an extinct cone-bearing conifer that existed about 300 million years ago. Thought to be the oldest conifer.



*Sphenopteris hollandica* (carbon fern) is an extinct seed fern from about 400 millions years ago.



*Pterodactylus kochi*, a flying reptile, was found in limestone from Bavaria, Germany, and dates from the late Jurassic Period, about 150 million years ago. It was a carnivore, preying on fish and other small animals.



*Botryopteris* (permian fern) is an extinct seed fern from about 300 million years ago.



*Archaeopteryx lithographica* was a prehistoric bird found in limestone in southern Germany dating from 150 million years ago. It is considered the oldest known bird and thought to be a transitional fossil between reptiles and birds.



*Odontopieura ovata*, is a trilobite, a group of extinct marine arthropods that first appeared around 520 million years ago and existed in the oceans for over 270 million years. Because of their exoskeleton, they left an extensive fossil record with about 17,000 known species.

# G IS FOR GEOLOGY

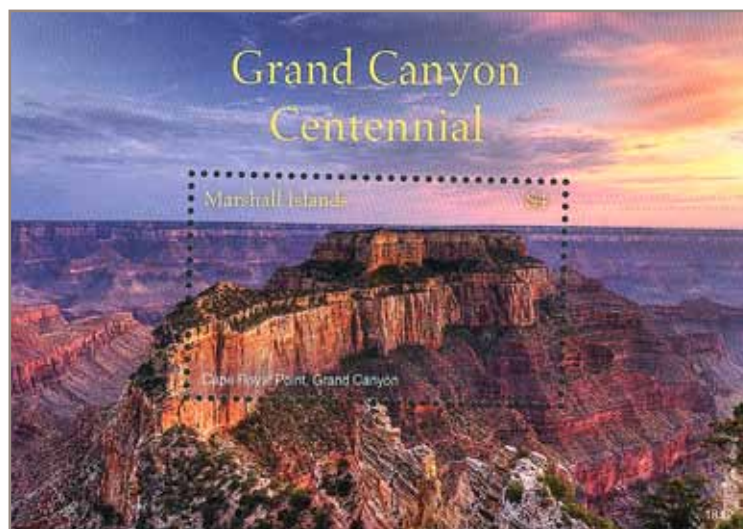
Geological Formations (Slovakia 2006)



Sand and compacted sandstone at Sandberg and the shell of *Flabellipecten solarium*, an extinct marine bivalve mollusk in the scallop family. Sandberg was formed nearly 15 million years ago when littoral and beach sediments from a long ago sea deposited sands and gravels. Over 300 types of fossils have been discovered including the shells of foraminifera, shellfish, shark teeth and the bones of large mammals.

The “stone basalt waterfall” of Somoska near the Slovakia-Hungary border was created by climatic factors (temperature, wind and precipitation) acting on volcanic rocks. The weathering of the surface layers of the rocks resulted in erosion products that were transported by water and air to areas where they accumulated leading to the buildup of new sedimentary rocks such as shown on the stamp and the central label.

Grand Canyon of Arizona (Marshall Islands 2018)



When the Rocky Mountains and Colorado Plateau were raised vertically 70 to 40 million years ago, it established an elevated platform allowing downward flowing water to form canyons over extended periods of erosion. About 6 million years ago, the Colorado River was a river that flowed from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and there is general consensus that the Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River beginning around that time. The Grand Canyon is a veritable textbook of geology.

# The Great Fear of 1789 and the French Revolution

By Frederick C. Skvara

Throughout the history of humankind, illness and disease have often helped shape the course of events. The ailments of famous people may have influenced their actions and the course of their lives. Diseases such as yellow fever, cholera and typhus have altered the outcomes of battles and wars. Rome was often saved from invaders because invading forces were decimated by malaria that was prevalent in the Pontine Marshes surrounding Rome.

## Ergot Poisoning

The ergot kernel, the sclerotium, is a dense mass of branched hyphae of the ergot fungus *Claviceps purpurea* that contaminates the rye plant, *Secale cereale*.



Rye plant, camel caravan, airplane dropping parcels. UN-Geneva 2005 [Food for Life]



Rye plant. France 2017

The ergot kernel contains the alkaloid ergotamine that in moderate doses causes the contraction of smooth muscle fibers such as those in small arteries and has been used in medicine to promote uterine contractions during childbirth, to control bleeding and in the treatment of migraines. Ergot also contains a number of



St. Anthony in a Landscape. GDR 1978

other alkaloids (1) and most have hallucinogenic properties such as lysergic acid, the precursor of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). The ingestion of fungus-contaminated rye grain causes the disease ergotism also known by its common name, St. Anthony's Fire. The name St. Anthony (2) is derived from the medieval monks who were dedicated to that saint and

who offered treatment to sufferer's of the disease, sometimes using relics of the saint and feeding them bread made from cleaned rye grains. The term 'fire' refers to the burning sensation often felt in their extremities. Ergotism can take two forms: 1) convulsive (acute) ergot

poisoning in which victims may exhibit hallucinations, seizures, jaundice, fever, paralysis, tremors, cardiac arrest and a host of other symptoms, and 2) gangrenous (chronic) ergotism, mainly the result of restricted blood flow, that can lead to abortions and dry gangrene of the extremities resulting in loss of fingers, toes and limbs.

A reference to ergot is mentioned in Chinese writings dating to 1100 B.C. noting its use in obstetrics. In 600 B.C. an Assyrian tablet describes "a noxious pustule in the ear of grain". The first documented epidemic of ergot poisoning occurred in southwest France in 944–945 with 20,000 deaths, but others occurred throughout the Middle Ages. In 1772 the campaign against the Ottoman Empire by Tsar Peter the Great was forced to retreat to find edible grains after being struck by an epidemic of ergotism. Although it had been known for some time that the cause of the illness was "bad bread", it wasn't until 1596 when the German physician, Wendelin Thelius from Hesse associated the ergot fungus with rye grains.

During the Middle Ages people ate a lot of bread and rye was the major grain used for bread. Records show that peasants would eat up to two to three pounds of bread a day, when they could afford it, and their daily caloric intake was only 1700 to 2000 calories of which 95% came from grains.



Peasant with Rye Bread (c. 1640) by Louis Le Nain (1593–1648). France 1980

Plowing the fields, sowing the grain & harvesting the crops. France 1940)



## The French Revolution

On May 5, 1789, Louis XVI (b. 1754–d. 1793; reigned 1774–1792) convoked the Estates-General, a general assembly representing the French estates of the realm, to address the government's financial problems. It was the first meeting since 1614 and the King wanted to retain a number of the divisive customs from 1614, especially the method of voting whereby the nobles and clergy together could outvote the commons by two to one. But in the late 18th century the concept of equality was important to the public and retention of the method of voting in 1614 was intolerable to the Third Estate.



Louis XVI. Sierra Leone 1989



Cardinal, Nobleman & Lawyer. France 1971 [Commemorates opening of Estates-General, May 5, 1789]

By June 17 the efforts to reconcile the three estates failed and the Third Estate redefined themselves as a National Assembly of the people. On June 20, 1789, the King gave the order to close the hall where the National



Oath of the Tennis Court (1790) by Jacques David. France 1939

Assembly met, but deliberations moved to a nearby tennis court where they swore the Tennis Court Oath in which the members of the Estates-General for the Third Estate vowed "not to separate, and to reassemble...until the constitution of France is established". Onto this stage entered *La Grande Peur*

(The Great Fear) as a precipitating event in the French Revolution.

### The Great Fear of 1789

The winter of 1788–1789 in France was unusually cold and snowy and was followed by a cold and humid spring, an ideal setup for the growth of the fungus *Claviceps purpurea's* hard phase ergot kernel on rye plants. The dry warmth of early May promoted the spread of spores by wind from plant to plant and that was followed by a warm, wet summer. Since there had been a disastrous crop failure in the fall of 1788, the hungry

peasants probably consumed the newly harvested 1789 rye without carefully cleaning it.

Between July 20 and August 6, 1789, in a number of areas of France, many of the peasants seemed to go wild, claiming to have seen bands of thieves coming to seize their crops, women feared they would be raped and murdered and their children massacred and their homes burned. As these alarming rumors spread, the peasants fled into the woods to hide or armed themselves with pitchforks, scythes or hunting rifles



Collegiate Church of St. Barnard & coat of arms of Dauphine. France 1949



Coat of Arms of Dauphine. France 1953

In Dauphiné the peasants looted and burned châteaux destroying the records of their debts to the landowners. But the peasants' fears were groundless. There were no organized bands of thieves and criminals roaming the countryside.

But the Great Fear exhibited by the peasants led to a great fear among the landowners that the peasants might seize property and incite violence against the landowners. As a result of this apprehension, the National Constituent Assembly, the renamed Estates-General, met on August 4, 1789, and voted to abolish what was called the *ancien régime* (old regime). The nobles (Second Estate) renounced their feudal rights and the clergy (First Estate) gave up their right to collect tithes. This effectively ended the absolute tyranny of the privileged classes in France and advanced the idea of the sovereignty of the people.

So what is the explanation for the wildness of the peasants and their Great Fear. Mary Kilbourne Matossian, at the University of Maryland, looking at 18th century French provincial records, noted that many French citizens suffered from a form of poisoning in 1789, the result of eating bad bread which we now know was ergotism. In some areas of France, many women miscarried and a Dr. Geoffrey, reporting in the *Histoire et mémoires de la Société royale de médecine*, saw a marked deterioration in public health in the second half of July 1789 reporting that jaundice, diarrhea and nervous attacks were common. Within the space of two weeks he had seen five patients who had "lost their heads" - become manic or imbecile or appeared dazed.

Later in August and September there were many cases of stomach pain, diarrhea and colic. He attributed all of these symptoms to eating "bad flour" and all were better after changing to "better bread".

Other physicians of the time also noted an increase in illness, especially nervous diseases in the second half of July and also suspected "bad bread". In a 1974 study by Jean Pierre Goubert, he quotes a physician in Clisson in western France who noted that the July 1789 rye crop was "prodigiously" affected by ergot and was found on one-twelfth (8%) of all ears. (i.e. rye flour containing 1% ergot is enough to cause a full-blown epidemic).

In his 1782 study of the 1770 & 1771 convulsive-ergotism epidemics in Germany, *History of the Crawl Disease*, Johann Daniel Taube (1725–1799), a German physician, described ergot poisoning for the first time and its ability to produce hallucinations and panic.

So was ergot to blame for the peasants' visions and panic on the eve of the French Revolution? We can't be certain yet it is remarkable that The Great Fear broke out at the time of the rye harvest and a diagnosis of ergot poisoning would account not only for the behavior of the peasants, but for the timing of the disturbances as well.

## Notes:

1) The 1936 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was jointly awarded to Sir Henry Hallett (1875–1968), an English physiologist and pharmacologist and Otto Loewi (1873–1961, a German pharmacologist and physiologist "for their discoveries relating to chemical transmission of nerve impulses". In his early work while at the Physiological Research Laboratories of Burroughs Wellcome in London he identified a number of chemical components of ergot including histamine and acetylcholine.

2) **St. Anthony (c. 251–356)** was an Egyptian monk who is considered the father of Christian monasticism and was known for periods of long fasting and resisting temptations from the Devil. The Hospital Brothers of Saint Anthony, also known as Antonines, was founded in 1095 by two noblemen from Dauphiné, after being cured from Saint Anthony's Fire by the relics of St. Anthony. The relics were housed in the church of Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye near Grenoble in southeastern France and a nearby hospital was set up to care, mainly for victims of ergotism. The Order of St. Anthony grew quickly and hospitals spread throughout France, and Germany. But once the connection between St. Anthony's Fire and ergot was made, the number of people with the illness sharply declined and with it was a reduction in the gifts needed for the Antonines to carry on their activities. In 1777 with their numbers markedly reduced, the Hospital Brothers of Saint Anthony were canonically united with the Knights of Malta.

A number of medieval artists created works depicting the suffering of the victims of St. Anthony's Fire, but one of the best known is the Isenheim Altarpiece, a moveable altarpiece, with painted panels by the German painter Matthias Grünewald (c. 1474/80–1528) and sculptures by the German sculptor Nicolas of Hagenau (c. 1445/1460– before 1538). The altarpiece was constructed between 1512 and 1516 for an Isenheim hospital built by the Brothers of St. Anthony in the village of Isenheim near Colmar in northeastern France. Here Antonine monks cared for the sick and dying peasants, many of them suffering from St. Anthony's Fire. The altarpiece is essentially a box of statues covered by folding painted wings and shown on the following pages in the miniature sheet issued by France in 2012, on the 500th anniversary of the altarpiece. The sheet has two cardboard panels on each side that when both opened reveal the central statues.



Colmar. France 2010

3) In 1951 there was a mass poisoning of 250 people in Pont-Saint-Espirit in southern France on August 15, 1951, known as Le Pain Maudit (cursed bread) that resulted in fifty people placed in asylums and seven deaths. Most studies suggest the etiology was ergot poisoning from contaminated rye grains.



Sir Henry Hallett Dale. Guyana 1995



Rhone Bridge, Pont-Saint-Espirit, France. 1966



Panels closed: The central panel shows a nighttime Crucifixion flanked by the Virgin in the arms of St. John the Evangelist on the left and John the Baptist on the right. In the left panel is St. Sebastian, patron saint of plague victims and archers, while on the right is St. Anthony the Abbot, patron saint of skin diseases, farmers and gravediggers. The lower panel is a detail of the Lamentation showing the dead body of Christ.



First set of Panels opened: The Annunciation on the left, The Virgin and Child with a host of musical angels in the center and the Resurrection on the right.



Second set of Panels opened: The panel on the left depicts Saint Anthony visiting Saint Paul the Hermit in what is meant to represent the Theban Desert. Medicinal plants sprout at the feet of the figures. The right panel shows the tormenting of Saint Anthony by hybrid demons, like dreams, that torment the saint's waking and sleeping hours and mirroring the physical and psychic suffering of the patients afflicted with ergot poisoning. Note the figure in the lower left of this panel with a distended belly, extensive skin lesions and webbed feet representing the victims of this disease. In the center are the three sculptures: Saint Augustine and Guy Guers, who commissioned the altarpiece, on the left; Saint Jerome on the right; Saint Anthony occupies the place of honor at the center of the work with two bearers of gifts. Near the left foot of Saint Anthony a pig is depicted, the emblem of the Antonine order. .



Classical Plays

*The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*

Based on Thomas North's translation (1579) of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, it was written in 1599. It was one of the first plays to be produced in the newly built Globe Theatre.

*The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra*

Also based on Plutarch's work Shakespeare probably wrote it in 1606. The play opens in 40 BC, two years after the end of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.



Italy 1929. Julius Caesar (102–44 BC)



Italy 1945. Augustus Caesar (Octavius) (63 BC–14 AD)



Italy 1941 Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler. Mussolini co-authored a play about Julius Caesar and banned Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.



Sierra Leone 1990. Sir Laurence Olivier as Antony



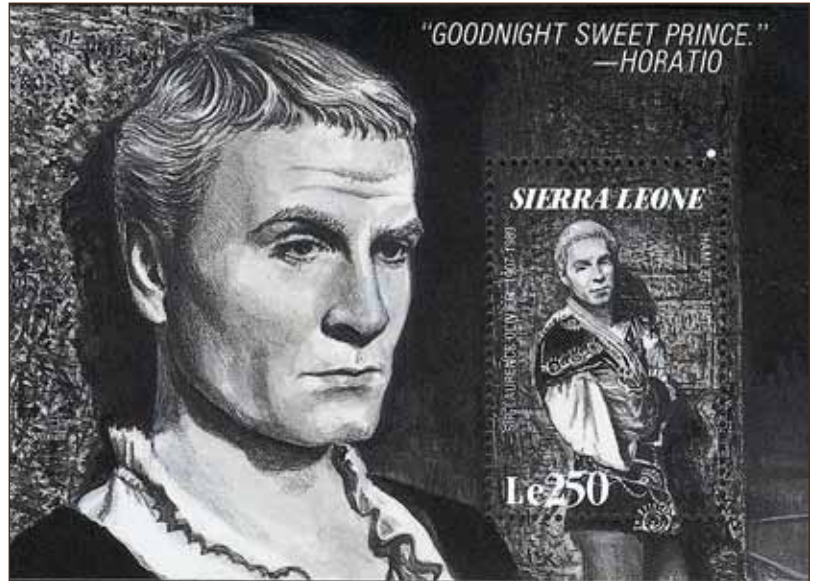
Great Britain 1964. Aerogramme. Inside picturing characters and scenes from Shakespeare's plays (clockwise from upper left): Falstaff and Mistress Quickly; Hamlet and Ophelia; Titania, Puck and Bottom; Prospero, Ariel and Caliban, Caesar and Brutus and Romeo and Juliet. On the front of the aerogramme (not shown) is Droeshout's portrait of Shakespeare and the indicium showing the Globe Theatre.

Shakespeare's Hamlet was probably written about 1601 or 1602 and is one of his most famous plays leading to numerous productions and scores of actors playing the role. It has also been one of the most popular of his plays to be portrayed philatelically. The plot is from a twelfth-century Scandinavian folk-tale about a Prince of Denmark who is committed to avenge the death of his father, the King of Denmark, who was murdered by his own brother and who has married the dead king's widow.



Denmark 1969. Kronborg Castle, Elsinore, Denmark, the setting for Hamlet and where the play is held every year.

Sierra Leone 1990. Sir Lawrence Olivier in a 1947 production of Hamlet. The quote on the souvenir sheet is by Horatio following Hamlet's death (Act V, Scene ii)



Liberia 1987. Hamlet with Yorick's skull and a gravedigger



Great Britain 1964. Hamlet and Yorick's skull



Great Britain 1982. Hamlet and Yorick's skull

HAMLET

*Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him Horatio—a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred my imagination is!*

Act 5, Scene i



Fujeira 1969. Hamlet kills his uncle, King Claudius

LAERTES

*The King, the King's to blame.*

HAMLET

*The point evenomd too? Then, venom, to thy work (stabs the king)*

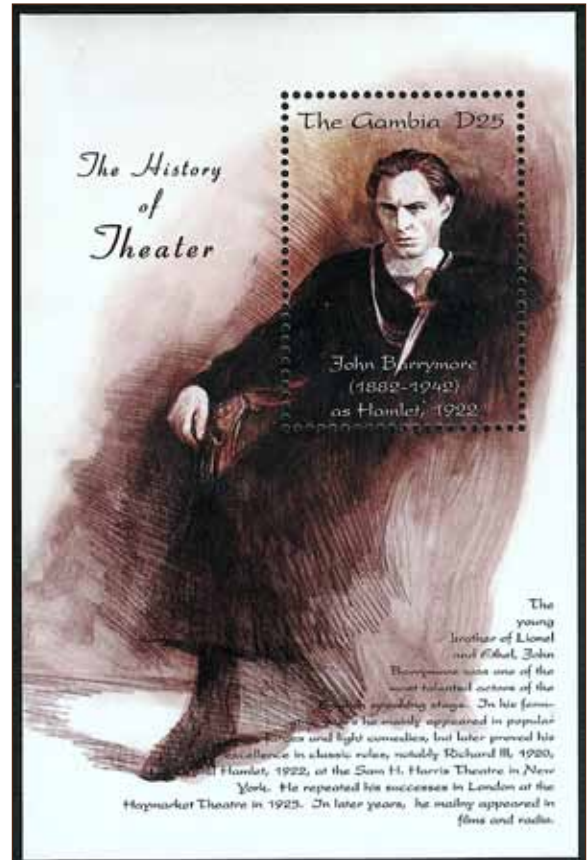
Act V, Scene ii

# William Shakespeare

# The Tragedy of Hamlet Prince of Denmark



San Marino 1990. Sir Lawrence Olivier (1907–1989) as Hamlet.



The Gambia 2001. John Barrymore (1882–1942) as Hamlet in a 1922 production in New York.



Romania 1983. Grigore Manolescu (1857–1892) as Hamlet.



France 1976. Jean Mounet-Sully (1841–1916) as Hamlet

## William Shakespeare

### *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

Macbeth was written sometime after 1603 when James VI of Scotland succeeded to the English throne. James was very interested in witchcraft and felt that Macbeth's comrade, the virtuous and noble Banquo, was his direct ancestor. The play is a story of witchcraft, murder and retribution based on a Scottish king's lust for power.



Germany 1976 Hermine Körner (1878–1960) portraying Lady Macbeth in Act II, Scene ii



Fujaira 1969. Macbeth has just killed King Duncan and returns to Lady Macbeth with the dagger in his hand. Act II, Scene ii



Liberia 1987. Macbeth consults the witches in Act IV, Scene i

### *The Tragedy of King Lear*

Produced around 1605 or 1606 King Lear is another play in which Shakespeare describes the borderline between madness and normalcy and shows step by step the mental deterioration of the King. It is a case history of senile dementia exhibiting both mental and physical decay. Because of its mature themes it is not often found in a school's curriculum.



Liberia 1987. King Lear with the Earl of Gloucester and Edgar, Gloucester's son. Act III, Scene iv.



German Democratic Republic 1973. . King Lear with his daughter Cordelia in Act I, Scene i. from a production staged by Wolfgang Langhoff.



## William Shakespeare

## *The Tragedy of Othello The Moor of Venice*

Shakespeare wrote *Othello* before 1604 as its first performance was before James I on November 1, 1604 in the Banqueting House at Whitehall. The play tells the story of a Moorish commander (Othello) who is sent to Cyprus, a Venetian protectorate, because of the rising hostilities between Turkey and Venice. While there, Othello is deceived by his ensign (Iago) into believing that his wife (Desdemona) is having an affair with a corporal (Cassio). In a fit of jealousy he kills her and then when he finds out that the accusations were false, kills himself.



Cyprus 1938. Othello Tower



Cyprus 1964. Performance of *Othello* at the Othello Tower.  
*You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus*  
Act IV, Scene i



Ras Al Khaima 1969. A scene from the opera *Othello* by Giuseppe Verdi. Othello is about to kill Desdemona in their bedchamber.



Liberia 1987. Othello about to kill Desdemona in their bedchamber.



Fujeira 1969. Othello about to kill Desdemona



Sierra Leone 1990. Sir Laurence Olivier as Othello in a 1964 production



## Discover the World: *Honduras*

Area – 43,278 sq.mi. Population – 9,325,000 (1995)  
Capital: Tegucigalpa



Located in Central America between Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, Honduras is chiefly mountainous with tropical lowlands on both its long coast on the Caribbean Sea and its narrow Pacific Ocean coast. The first Spanish settlement was established in 1524 and in 1539 was included in the Captaincy General of Guatemala, an administrative division of the Spanish Empire. It declared its independence in 1821 and from 1823 to 1838 was part of the United Provinces of Central America which broke up in 1839. Its recent history has been marred with periodic revolutions and military coups and it has become a transshipment point for illegal drugs being smuggled to the United States.



Bananas.  
Honduras 1943

Its economy is based mainly on agriculture with coffee, bananas, tobacco, cotton, sugar and forest products being the main exports.

Guatemala, along with what is now Honduras was the center of the Mayan Empire, but by the time Columbus visited the area in 1502, the Mayans had deserted their Honduran cities and moved north to the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico.

La Mosquitia is an area of almost impenetrable rainforest in northeastern Honduras with swamps, lagoons, rivers and mountains and labeled on early maps as *Portal del Infierno* or “Gates of Hell”.



Copán, a Mayan city  
(A.D. 426 – 850).  
Honduras 1939

Until recently this area of 865,000 acres was one of the least explored

and most pristine areas of lowland rainforests remaining in Central America. Legend has it that somewhere in Mosquitia were the ruins of a Lost Civilization known by several names including the Lost City of the Monkey God and Ciudad Blanca (White City).

In 2012 a team consisting of archeologists, engineers, an anthropologist and even British soldiers trained in jungle survival skills discovered large urban settlements that are believed to be the Ciudad Blanca or White City of the legend. Douglas Preston, a writer for the *New Yorker* magazine and the *National Geographic*, was also a member of the team and published *The Lost City of the Monkey God: A True Story* (2017), the story of the expedition. The team battled torrential rains, quickmud that could swallow a person, jaguars, the Fer-de-lance, one of the world’s deadliest snakes and disease-carrying insects. But it wasn’t until they returned from the expedition that tragedy struck. Preston and some members of the team had contracted mucocutaneous Leishmaniasis from infected sand flies, a horrifying, sometimes lethal, and incurable disease that can lead to major disfigurement of the nose and face.



Rio Plátano in La Mosquitia.  
Honduras 2019



Emblem of Kaha Kamasá  
archeological site,  
Ciudad Blanca.  
Honduras 2016



Were-jaguar sculpture  
in Ciudad Blanca.  
Honduras 2016



*Panthera onca* (Jaguar).  
Honduras 2019 [One of the  
sites within Ciudad Blanca  
has been given the name  
Ciudad del Jaguar]

The expedition discovered numerous artifacts documenting the existence of the fabled city and placing its age from A.D. 1000 to 1400 as part of an entire civilization. But scientists have no idea who these ancient people were. In 2017 an assessment of the biological diversity surrounding Ciudad del Jaguar within the Ciudad Blanca complex was undertaken and revealed an amazing wealth of plant and animal life.

